

# IN-BETWEEN SPACE.

The dynamics and user circulation of an office building.



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## INTRODUCTION

In society today we see technology and industries changing at a speed so fast it is at times difficult to keep up. This sentence is applicable to a vast majority of topics and fields it might not be a big statement, but it is without a doubt a true one. This thesis chooses to focus on the area of office design and in particular the changes that have happened over the last decades in how we see an office layout.

The increased speed of change we see in society in general, but also in certain industries require the thoughts and philosophy behind a company and the office space to be adaptable and open for change. Physical space must be flexible so that it can support new structures and new ways of collaborating according to the markets and the tasks that the organisation is facing.

In this thesis, there are three areas of focus: office landscape, the in-between spaces within one such space and the re-creation of a chosen in-between space. One topic overlap and leads to the other, focusing and narrowing down the area of interest. Through research, case studies, site visits and experience within office landscape the chosen in-between space of interest is the one that plays a large role in defining the dynamics of a building as well as being an important factor in the internal user circulation. The reason behind the chosen space of interest is because of the user experience one can have, as well as these are the spaces, which one has to have within an office space, but the interpretation of one is free and flexible.

When performing a thorough research process within the topic of office space, the goal is to create an understanding of this particular area of interior architecture. By narrowing down the focus on to a particular space, the aim is to achieve a knowledge about this certain area which can be applicable in the last part of this thesis: the product, the re-creation of a chosen in-between space. To be able to collect knowledge, to see and experience the

challenges and to be able to be in the space as one of the users, two case studies have been chosen. One being a new building where the design was created to meet the user's needs, the other is an old building where the design had to fit around the skeleton and the parameters of the already existing building. Both these buildings have the in-between space of interest, the findings in the research being very different from each other.

With the research, the case studies and the findings in mind, a product, based upon a self-created design brief will be created. The aim is to redesign, to "save" a space and make it into a usable, innovative and an exciting place to be where the end result has the purpose of changing the dynamic of the building. The design will be shown in this thesis in one building, but the purpose behind the design will be applicable in a large variety of buildings where the core issue is the same. In the end, it is the redesign of an existing building that is the main challenge. The goal is for an old building to undergo a change so that it will be able to compete with newer buildings and be desirable to house companies in the future.

# CHAPTER 01

## designing an office

Space is the “body language” of an organization

Definition of office  
(Oxford dictionary)  
noun

A room, set of rooms, or building used as a place of business for non-manual work.

## TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORKPLACE.

100 years ago, the workplace was transformed by a series of new industrial technologies<sup>1</sup>. The typewriter, telephone, elevator, electric light bulb and adding machine were all products that helped create a new environment for working. As a result of the industrial revolution and the new technology added to the workplace, the environment for working changed and a template for office work in the twentieth century were created. This new template was based on the idea of sitting still and belonging to a certain space. The new workspaces were based on a desk or a cellular office. Depending where you were on the company ladder, your place of work would change, the higher the position in the company, the bigger the office.

A desk-based workplace supported by meeting rooms was essentially the basis of the office workplace for decades. The employees with large enough office had their own meeting table and possibly even some soft seating. This thesis will not spend a lot of time discussing how one used to work a hundred years ago, but it is important to understand where the office philosophy comes from, to understand the challenges we are facing today. The way of working has been pushed and challenged over the years, and when that has been developed further so has the thoughts about the workspace and the efficiency in

one. The old way of an office layout, which was based on a high number of cellular offices, is no doubt inefficient when looking at square meters. The inefficiency this brings has proven to be a problem for many offices with the employees being spread over a larger surface bringing the employee communication down. Another factor to consider is that it is far more expensive to rent an office with space for e.g. hundred cellular offices compared to hundred workstations. When this problem was first addressed and companies started toying with the idea of giving up the cellular office, understandably, many of the ones who got spoilt in the sense of having their own office, has proven to be reluctant to let them go<sup>2</sup>.

The office provided the best of both worlds, but as we are aware of, such an office is highly inefficient if dedicated to one person. As soon as the nature of our work moved away from the more routine, individual process work, the desk and the cellular office has proven to be a compromise, only suitable for some tasks, some of the time. Not only can enclosed spaces create division and isolation, but also, one can only use one component at one time. As mentioned earlier, some of the luxury one could have in a cellular office was a meeting table. Practical indeed for the one who had the office, but in a company, the need for a meeting room goes beyond that. Everyone would benefit

“The employees with large enough office had their own meeting table and possible even some soft seating, great for them but what about all the other employees that did not have this luxury? ”

from having access to meeting and project rooms, and by introducing these rooms to be available for everyone to enjoy, the efficiency of a workspace would increase. Less space would be left empty throughout the day as well as everyone would be able to use the same facilities.

### **TECHNOLOGY- THE ROOT TO CHANGE IN THE WORKPLACE.**

The changes we face today are different from the changes during the industrial revolution, but they are affecting the workplace just as much. Today, technology is creating our workplace, the Internet is always undergoing progress, which is forcing nearly all organisations to rethink and regroup. In the 1960's, two American economists, Peter Drucker and Fritz Machlup identified a group of workers as knowledge workers<sup>3</sup>. Back then, that was professions like doctors, lawyers, academics, accountants and scientists. Over time though, technology has changed and a new work force has emerged. Drucker drew attention to this and described them as knowledge technologists. The new and emerging professions were computer technician, software designers, and analysts in clinical trials, paralegals and so on. With these new fields emerging, the group described, as knowledge workers grew bigger. They all had one thing in common, which was

also becoming more and more normal in society: they were all undertaking tasks that required formal education rather than traditional apprenticeship. As a result of the new way of working, flexibility is key, and one does not necessarily need "a home", a desk anymore to get through a workday. The increased speed of change we see at the moment, in society in general and in particular in certain industries requires willingness to adapt. The traditional "pyramid structure" is now replaced by "the learning organisation", the value based management<sup>4</sup>. The physical space must be flexible so that it can support the new structures, way of working and collaborate according to the markets and the task that the organisation is facing. The reality is that many office workers today are knowledge workers, typically spending much of their time in formal or informal meetings as well as multi project work. When looking at many office workers today, a large portion of their working day is spent increasingly in other locations for meetings or interactive and interdisciplinary work. This leaves the office desk simply to be a base for people to sporadically use while in the office.

### **KNOWLEDGE SHARING.**

Stepping out of the typical way of looking at a workplace is all a part of a broader trend towards a more open working environment for all staff, at all levels. This can and will without a doubt provide many benefits for organisations. Enhanced communication, better collaborations and teamwork between employees are among the positive effects of looking at the workspace from a different angle. By stepping away from the enclosed office plans, people see each other, your colleague is not just an e-mail anymore. All of a sudden know who your colleagues are in a different way than before. Isolating yourself in your office is no longer an option. Suddenly the energy of the office can affect you as well. What is important to emphasize is that there is no chance that every type of company across the world has a wish to embrace and work in a 100% open landscape philosophy. But every company in the world can work on their work philosophy and try to make their workplace the best possible place to work and give the employees an environment where there is room and possibility for growth. Working on a philosophy that is based upon an open landscape concept is definitely the right way to start.

When discussing the benefits of an open landscape, to fully comprehend these, it is important to discuss the drawbacks of an enclosed work environment. Isolation

and lack of casual communication between employees would be one of the major factors. By not communicating as good as you possibly can with your colleagues, knowledge sharing does not reach its potential. Knowledge sharing is important so that the experience that is within a company gets shared with other staff, which is something that would work in a beneficial way towards knowledge growth within the company. It is important to remember that you cannot just decide to share knowledge, the key issue in knowledge sharing is to realise the difficulties that some employees might have in doing so. The question to ask is, when you share knowledge, do you then also share your mistakes<sup>5</sup>? For employees that have been sitting in their own cubicle their whole working life, it can be quite intimidating not only to share knowledge but to share mistakes, to collaborate, to listen to others ideas and to “throw yourself” out into the “jungle” that is the social space of the office.

When knowledge sharing does not reach its potential, an effect of this would be that a large majority of the employees would not reach their possible potential either. The best way to grow in your job would be to use the colleagues one has around to push yourself further to become more experienced and knowledgeable. If looking at a new employee, the learning curve would not nearly be as steep working isolated in a cellular office, as it could be

if one worked in more open environment. In an open environment it is a great deal easier to ask a quick question to a colleague, discuss something concerning a project or just talk about something work related to get another one’s opinion. By having this opportunity, one would faster move forward if stuck with a project. We are better together, and it is by acknowledging this and using each other one will reach its full potential.

Finding the balance in an open landscape office is difficult and crucial for it to work. The challenges one will meet are many: keeping the noise level down, having enough supporting elements nearby, keeping the noisy zones together and away from working zones, finding out the different needs one has in the different companies as well as considering employees satisfaction and comfort in an open landscape. The list can go on and on. Many people might find it un-comfortable making phone calls while there might be people around to hear them, even if it is for work. Being able to concentrate while hearing other people around you and getting into the zone needed to be able to work efficiently and focused. The transition is huge and for some people, difficult. Further on, what can be done in achieving a successful open landscape office will be discussed.

“The question to ask is, when you share knowledge, do you then also share your mistakes? ”

## LEARN FROM MISTAKES.

As it is with every trend, you try, you fail and you learn from your mistakes. The early open plan trend of knocking down walls without any thought of the consequences and how it would work in practice failed and people associated the term open-plan with something bad<sup>6</sup>. Huge open plan office environments were created making it impossible to work efficiently. In the aftermath of the first tries of an open-environment workspace, it became clear that it would be important to facilitate the different needs one have during a work day. Places to retreat and hide would be as important as places to interact and be seen. Barbara T. Armstrong says in the article “At Americas Best Workplaces, Good Design Reigns Supreme”, that there is no corporate culture without community<sup>7</sup>. A community where people come together, connect, celebrate and create a spirit of camaraderie.

Together with the identification of different needs in a work place new ways of working became important<sup>8</sup>. Ways of working such as: project work, cross-team work and the employees using each other for knowledge sharing became much more relevant and required in the day-to-day interaction. The importance to facilitate and encourage this became clear. To meet these needs, a different type of workplace was required, and the idea of a “landscape office” was emerging. With the new landscape

philosophy blossoming, a new language and needs emerged. Areas like touch downs, pods and study booths, lounges, hubs, resource area, hot desk and café areas were all part of this new office landscape. All elements mentioned can also be discussed as different ways of working. You do not need a room with a certain label to do a certain type of job. All one need is a few supplements that make the work possible. To have a quick meeting, you need an area where it is ok to sit down while not disturbing others, this area which facilitates the spontaneous meeting would usually be areas where you can find a coffee machine or in-between spaces that connects different spaces in the building. To do some collaborative work in a small or a large group, you might need a project table and Internet access, but one can also sit down at the same place to do some solo work and all the needs one might have will still be fulfilled. The flexibility of one such space means that it is more likely to be used by a number of different scenarios.

As discussed earlier, a day at work does not necessarily mean a day at the office/a day by the desk. With the introduction of the new landscape office, different desk-sharing models, both in terms of sharing ratios and arrangement for who gets involved became applicable to different companies. In terms of ratio, 8:10 (8 desks for every 10 people) or 7:10 are the most popular<sup>9</sup>. In some cases, sharing ratios can be pushed

harder for more impact. 1:3 or 1:2 is a popular model for more mobile consulting organisations. The higher the degree of sharing, the more opportunities there are for efficiencies and a more interesting work place.

“There is no corporate culture without community”



## **STEPPING AWAY FROM SHOWN HIERARCHY IN THE OFFICE.**

When knocking down walls and having a more equal playing field as a workspace, a sense of equality among the employees is created, at least a visual one. The sense of expressed hierarchy is an important factor that is and should slowly disappear in the world of open landscape. This will take time and in some offices, depending on their field will probably never really happen. It is worth emphasizing that in the case of some offices it is a choice to not step away from the sense of hierarchy within the office and in some cases there is no way away from it. In the traditional office environments, the organisational hierarchy is often reflected in the size of both office and furniture<sup>10</sup>. There will always be people with more power than others in a company, and that is the way it should be, but one of the benefits of not showing this off in a materialistic, square meter kind of way is that the colleagues are less likely to feel like they are worth less as an employee. The difference in employees' worth is a realistic factor when breaking it down but one should be careful to show it. A company needs a whole range of people doing their job well to be successful. This includes young people straight out of university, the experienced ones who will take responsibility when needed, people to clean and everything in between. Acknowledge and appreciate this is extremely important.

No matter where you are on the company ladder, a simple thing goes for everyone. A little praise never hurt anybody: as a result of that, what the employee will give back is hard work and devotion. Simply, making people feel like they are seen and valued goes far further than valuing only a certain few.

## **HOW TO CREATE EXCITEMENT FOR OPEN LANDSCAPE?**

Even where the most appropriate workplace solutions are developed and there are no compromises being made, such a workplace is totally dependent on its workforce to be successful. Staff trying to work in an "old" way in a new style work environment can be disastrous. Half of the job of being successful in changing the ways of working lays in cultural and mental change with the employees. One very efficient way of getting the employees excited for change is through the leaders. If the leaders are not excited about the change, how can the employees be? It is important that the management has a clear definition of the organisational values and criteria for success and participates actively in process of change<sup>11</sup>. Open, clear and relevant communication is imperative to effective staff engagement. Also is the understanding that people react and understand change in different ways. Some people need to see facts and figures before they embrace change while others need to see proof. Some might be hesitant

to change while others will welcome it. The reactions will most definitely be many; preparation for the change to come is key. Human beings are creatures of habit, which we prove to ourselves every single day. We have our morning routines, we might like our coffee a certain way, and chances are that if an employee has worked in the same way for years, that person will be reluctant of change. When a person is reluctant, it is like they have decided that they do not like change and therefore will subconsciously or on purpose be negative to a new way of working. This is why the leaders have to be visibly positive towards change as well as go ahead as an example of what one can achieve by embracing a new way of working instead of working against it.

## WHEN DESIGNING AN OFFICE.

In the book “Make space” it is written: Space is the “body language” of an organization. Intentional or not, the form, functionality and finish of a space reflects the culture, behaviours, and priorities of the people within it. Obviously, there is more to creating a space than just defining perimeters.

When designing an office there are certain tools that can help us break down the needs, one of them is using a design template, which breaks down the needs of an office into: places, properties, actions and attitudes<sup>12</sup>. Places and properties address the divisions in a space and the features within them. Actions and attitudes address who is in the space and what they do.

- Place: are broad spatial types that share an overall purpose. There are a few things all spatial areas have in common. They all have a home base. A home base is a physical or digital space where individuals or teams anchor their work and identity. From an emotional perspective, it is the creative centre of gravity from which people advance and retreat. The specifications of the details can be quite different, but the needs remain the same. They also all include thresholds such as doorways or openings, and transitions such as hallways.
- Properties: are the specific aspects of people or space that can be enhanced or altered to impact behaviour. Spatial characteristics can be used to transform behaviour and mood.
- Actions: are behaviours and tasks. If you were to take a snapshot at any given time, an action would be captured. Defining the actions help defining the space and the needs one might have in a workplace.
- Attitude: are cultural values and habits. Our attitudes steer our decisions and build momentum in everything we do. When a space is at its most sublime, it reinforces and encourages desired values.

These are one among many design templates to use, but the aspects that are listed here are all important in the creation of space. Especially when designing for an office which has a large variety of users and number of needs. The trick is to define an area of use, then use minimal but meaningful semi permanent element to define and support it. Consider behaviour first and implementation second<sup>13</sup>. When thinking about a space and how to tackle it, dividing it into zones helps clarify and isolate the underlying needs. In the end, the physical space, the working methods and the organisational culture must match one another as it has a strong influence on the organisational image.

## **THE IDENTIFICATION OF PROFESSION OR PLACE OF WORK.**

Research suggest that knowledge workers discussed earlier on identify themselves more with their professional discipline and specialism and less with their employer and place of work<sup>14</sup>. They expect to work in a variety of situations and for a number of employees over their working time. The constant is their knowledge, which they want to update. One could argue that this should be a factor important to consider when designing an office. Do we want a draft of people going through a workplace, or do we want people to get a sense of belonging for the place where they work. The way offices used to work; the employees had their own space, which would signal the ones individual significance in the community. When space has less physical dividers and we give up the spatial signifiers of our existence, we start to feel a little more vulnerable. This vulnerability can manifest itself as a lost sense of belonging. The challenge then is to create a space that is innovative and pushing the boundaries as well as fulfilling the needs one has to feel a sense of privacy and ownership. When a space feels extra-special, it has a cascading impact on the users. It does not need to be a person's own space, but it has to create a feeling that makes it different from other places at the workplace. Special touches create a sense of belonging. That little bit extra that makes it stands out

to other places. That one place that feels different can be that one thing which makes people feel a sense of belonging. It is not without reason that workplaces like Google, Microsoft and Skype get talked about and their workspaces discussed. They stand out, they are special and the workspace is unique, giving the employees a sense of belonging as well as feeling like they are a part of something special. The sense of belonging is created through a uniqueness and variety in the office. Creativity is stimulated in different ways, in everything from a ping-pong table to quiet and private zones. These different offices might be a workplace for a large number of people, but they all manage to achieve one special thing. They stand out as something special and different, and in their office layout they show that employee satisfaction is important to them.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 01

In chapter 01; designing an office, the roots of office design have been discussed. What triggered the start of the office culture and how has it changed over the years. In more recent time, the philosophy behind the build up of an office has been challenged as a result of the change in today's technology. How we work has changed tremendously as a result of, among other things: the Internet. It is imperative that offices alongside following the technology change, rethink the way they think about the office layout. With the research done, it is an interesting finding that technology runs its own course, while it is the people that hold back. We are forced to follow technology, embrace it rather than work against it. When it comes to office layout and the best possible way to work as a result of the changes we are facing, the result and findings are that they are not embraced in the same way. The changes require more time and process work but luckily with time and patience changes are being made.

“How we work has changed tremendously as a result of, among other things: the Internet ”

# CHAPTER 02

inbetween-space

## IN-BETWEEN SPACE

When breaking the office space down into categories, we can divide them into different blocks, meeting different needs. You have your home base, which serves as the principal place for an individual or a group. You have gathering places, which can be anything from a conference room to a canteen. You have the support structure, which works as a service centre for the office including places like print rooms and storage. Last but not least, you have the element that brings all these previous mentioned elements together, thresholds and transitions.

Thresholds and transitions are in-between spaces. These often serve as boundaries between intended places and events. Because thresholds and transitions are ubiquitous, in an overall experience of an environment they play a large role as they connect the other elements of an office space together. Transitions are about movement and the moment<sup>15</sup>. In any given situation the first and the last thing one experiences is a transition. We move right through them. Hallways, level change and lunch breaks are all different forms of transitions. These elements, whether they surround us or it is something that we do, are so normal that we rarely recognize them. They are so common that they often do not stand out as a detail that needs to be considered and designed.

Ignoring the significance of an in-between space is something that should be avoided. It is important that a space, and the dynamics it work as a collaboration between the different elements of an environment. The shift from one activity to another, and from one place to the next requires a clear and direct support.

## IN-BETWEEN SPACE IN AN OFFICE LANDSCAPE.

When considering in-between spaces in an office landscape it is important to open your view of what such a space is. You cannot create an in-between space, the creation of that space is the result of its surroundings. It can be inside or out, that does not really matter. An in-between space is often not one that is created; it is the result of a creation. As mentioned earlier, thresholds and transitions are important because they sew the other elements of an office together. For an office space to work seamlessly and efficiently, in-between spaces needs to have a purpose as well as working as an elegant shift between the different areas. Not only do they intertwine different spaces, they also create distance. In an office you have “hot” zones, this is where the activity is higher than other areas of the office. This might be at an entrance point, where a coffee machine is placed or by the toilets. These are areas that attract people and with that come noise.

In-between spaces, in this case thresholds, works as a distance creator between the heart of the noise and the workstations. The distance created is crucial in an open office landscape so that the silence people need to work is not being jeopardised by the noise people make in “hot” zones. Respecting this and creating the distance needed is an essential ingredient in a successful open landscape layout.

One of the beneficial factors of a cellular office is that one gets the silence needed to focus and work. This is an element, which has to be taken out of the “old” ways of working, and added in the “new” ways. This is where new and creative solutions which facilitates this need comes in, as well as introducing the employees how to best use these new features in the office. It is possible to take the person out of the cellular office, but taking the ways of working out as well can be a challenge. This is why examples have to be shown and time given so that people can get used to the new ways of working.

Within the office, in-between spaces are important so that the office is not only based on work related areas. For an open landscape to work, you need breathers, transitions and dividers. In an open and highly collaborative environment, extroversion and activity are encouraged. The counterpoints are introversion, reflection and introspection<sup>16</sup>. At TED2012, Susan Cain<sup>17</sup> talks passionately about

people’s behaviour and how in a communal space, all sorts of people, from introvert to extrovert can come out and interact and socialize on their own terms. It’s a safe space because you choose to be there. To create such situations, the Interior Architect have to make decisions about how and where they would suggest for the communication and interaction to happen. To meet the needs of both these two points, the in-between spaces becomes important. They work as transition spaces between loud energetic spaces to areas of a different focus. This could either be solo work, coffee bars or group work. Often the space suggests a different type of atmosphere than compared to the main working space.

Eliminating walls and opaque partitioning is one of the first significant steps in creating flexible and collaborative spaces<sup>18</sup>. As a result of the walls disappearing, boundaries become even more important but also labelled areas of the office as we used to know it becomes blurrier. For people that are used to be able to shut the door of their office to get the silence needed as well as eliminating themselves for distracting elements, can the experience and the idea of an open landscape be quite intimidating. This is of course understandable, but even though one does not have walls anymore to set a boundary for your space it does not mean that one have to sit in a completely open landscape as far from the old ways of working as possible. Understanding

“Within the office, in-between spaces are important so that the office is not only based on work related areas”

the needs of the employees and creating zones, is a way of finding a middle point which can challenge the cellular office as well as keeping the employee satisfied as the person will recognize some of the old facilities. Both visual transparency and acoustic privacy are important in collaborative spaces, as well as the users finding and wanting to use the elements which supports the different ways of working.

The need for transition space like hallways does not vanish in the absence of the walls that used to shape it. Walls no longer define the transition space, but for the dynamics of the office, this space is just as important as before. Analysing the office space, the companies needs and how to best plan out these needs is an important job that has to be carefully planned. Because every company has different needs, the research and the detail in the planning is essential for an open landscape success to happen. In planning this, one has to think of where best to put the loud zones and where to place the quiet areas to protect them from the noise. Obviously one needs areas in-between and transitions between these two opposite. This is where other office needs as meeting rooms, project rooms and service stations comes in, and to connect all this, the in-between areas.

## **SPONTANEOUS CONVERSATION.**

Thresholds and transitions are spaces that are free and spontaneous. People tend to enjoy striking up conversations at thresholds, on their way in and out of different spaces. It is a casual space and one does not need to feel that the conversation has to last a long time. It is not the time of the conversation that determines the importance of the talk. Spontaneous conversations that can easily happen in thresholds can be of great importance for the workers and far more efficient than planned meetings.

Social activities occur spontaneously as a direct consequence of people moving about and being in the same space. This implies that social activities are indirectly supported whenever necessary when optional activities are given better conditions<sup>19</sup>. Acknowledging the importance of such spaces, is important and what a company can achieve when the focus has been right is priceless. Areas, which facilitates for informal meetings are integrated in the working areas to enhance the interaction between employees<sup>20</sup>.

The possibility of meeting co-workers in connection with daily coming and goings is a valuable opportunity to establish a relationship as well as an opportunity to share information and knowledge<sup>21</sup>. It is so much easier to ask someone a quick question compared to walking over to someone's office, knocking on his or her

“Social activities occur spontaneously as a direct consequence of people moving about and being in the same space ”



door and then ask the question. Social events can evolve spontaneously as situations are allowed to develop. Visits and gatherings can be arranged on short notice as well as it being far easier to “drop by” to arrange something or agree about what is to take place<sup>22</sup>. A phone call or e-mail can always be pushed forward, but by bumping into a colleague, a question can easily and quickly be asked. That has a positive effect on the employees. Not only do they get an answer to a question, but by bumping into a colleague you can feel the energy of other employees, get a little more understanding of what other people are working on as well as feeling like you are a part of something. This is not of course the only way of communicating with colleagues, but this is one of the great benefits of in-between spaces. By facilitating for frequent meetings, contact network is maintained in a far simpler and less demanding way.

### **FIRST IMPRESSION.**

When entering an office, a first impression is set. No matter whether it is an small or an large company, first impressions is what meet you right after you cross the entrance door. It sets the tone, and is undoubtedly important. As immaterial values plays a bigger and bigger role, it is essential to make the personality of the organisation visible externally, but in particular also internally<sup>23</sup>. Not only is this area important

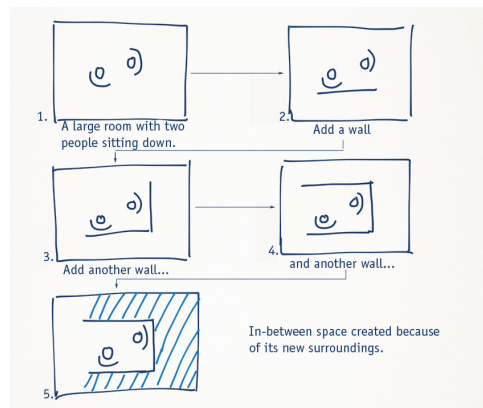
to set the tone, but also to create a diversion between the private side of the company and the one where you invite visitors. A separation between the office workers and guests is important. Different companies have different policies when it comes to company privacy. Some need areas, which are exclusive and unreachable without an invitation, others do not have this need of secrecy. Not matter how secret parts of the company is, there is an important factor in keeping a certain separation between the employees and the guests. Even if it is not because of secrecy, at times an employee would prefer to work quietly without anyone from the outside being present. In-between space works well here as a natural element to keep guests at an area of the office where they are welcome but also at a distance from where they are not wanted.

In regards of visitors, and from their point of view, transitions are important. It lets the guest feel and see the energy of the space immediately, but allow them to enter it on their own terms by offering a visible threshold between themselves and the action. “On their own term” is essential in achieving comfort, it is important in office spaces that the users are given the freedom to either be in the action or step away from it. The same goes for visitors. By giving them the opportunity to witness before being apart of the action gives a nice chance for transition.

## EXAMPLES OF IN-BETWEEN SPACES:

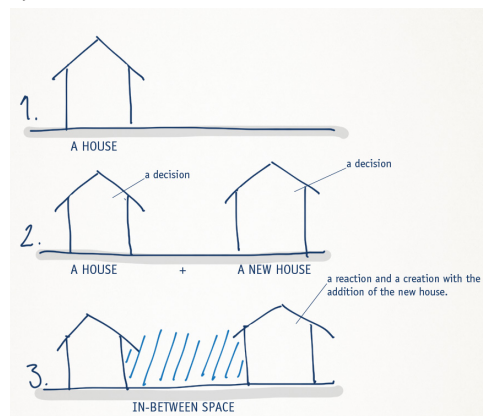
- Inside space.

Simply adding a few walls or dividing a space with furniture creates an in-between space. As the drawing suggest, a reaction to the added walls is a new space. A smaller group of people would feel more comfortable in a smaller space, when intimacy is created, the users respond to that as well.



- Outside space.

As the drawing shows, this in-between space is a reaction to a creation.



## SPECIFIC IN-BETWEEN SPACES:

- DnB Bjørvika.

One of the most important in-between spaces in this massive office building is the route network that is placed on the outside of the core of the building, spiralling all the way to the top. It connects the first floor to the top floor, breaking it up on every floor with coffee bars areas for social chatter and informal meetings. By spiralling around the building, there is no place left behind and every employee has a way of connecting with the different floors in close range.



- Posthuset

Posthuset is Norway's highest office building with its 50.576m<sup>2</sup> spread over 26 floors. It houses over 2000 workers and is located right in the city centre of Oslo<sup>24</sup>. In 2003, the large office building was renovated, 7 stories were added and a narrower midsection was created. This

narrow part of the building, the in-between space, now works as a social gathering point for the different tenants. Depending on the size of the tenants, some have a three stories opening in the middle of their workspace creating a beautiful airy feel as well as connecting the different floors.



## ZOOMING IN ON AN IN-BETWEEN SPACE

As discussed earlier, an in-between space can be a large variety of spaces. If not defined, one can easily be confused when discussing such a space. After establishing the general basis of an in-between space in an office building, zooming in and defining *one* specific in-between space is necessary.

This thesis will continue to discuss an in-between space that is:

- A part of defining the dynamics of the building.
- Interactive with its users.
- In one sense or another, it includes and involves the user circulation in the building.

An in-between space is an important part of a building and this thesis chooses to focus on the specific space, which has been allowed to be largely a part of defining the building, and doing so by letting the users be a part of it. This could be an area that is always pumping with life and you as the user can feel the energy of this building by just being within that area. This thesis finds a significance and importance in the in-between space where the space and the users are working together. They make each other strong and at the end of the day, you can discuss an experience.

Spaces and user experience should always be linked and put up against each other. Ask yourself, is this space creating an experience? If the answer is no, then the chances are it will most likely prove to be an unexciting area. The reason behind choosing this specific in-between space is because, as discussed earlier, transitions and thresholds are inevitable in a building. When focusing on an office building, a place where people spend a vast majority of their day, it would be a shame not to create something special and involving in such an important part of a building. One of the exciting challenges with creating a space with this much freedom is looking at it from a human angle. Atriums for instance are such large spaces, getting it down to a human size and a user experience can be a real challenge. Also, a question the designer should ask him or herself is; should it be “just” a space, or should it work as a playground for the users?

A playground for the user, a space to be excited about and a place where the users feel like they are using the building and not just being in it. When this space is intertwined with the action of transport and movement that is when the building comes alive. Why should movement and communication between the different floors only happen hidden away in elevators or boring stairways? That action, the one of user circulation is such a large part of ones day. The space created with the motivation

of putting those two together, space and user circulation, is of importance and focus further on in this thesis.

Not only is the in-between space where you combine user circulation and user communication interesting, but also since that space is quite free to interpret, the designer stands free to define it. The power of area and furniture placement is extremely interesting and an important asset in influencing the users. As a designer one have the power to influence people on a level that is for the users unconscious. For interior architecture as well as many other areas of design, the design is good if it's not noticed. Further on in this thesis, that will be the goal. To create a space where the design is integrated, the needs fulfilled and the users encouraged (by the design) to act in a way that did not feel normal before.

# CHAPTER 03

## case studies

Based upon the area of in-between space this thesis chooses to focus on, the two buildings discussed in chapter 03 have been chosen as case studies. They are very different from each other, but interestingly enough, they have been planned, at different times to meet the needs of the same company. One is brand new and one is old, one was built to meet the needs the users have, one was adjusted to meet them.

The one thing in which they have in common, and which has been the main focus while studying these two buildings is a particular in-between space. The in-between space in mind is the one that involves the internal user circulation of the building. This space is not the elevators, but can be, if successful partly a substitution of. These spaces have been solved in very different ways in these two buildings, and as discussed later, the results are very different.

# DESIGN BRIEF

A vast majority of office buildings today are buildings that were built a long time ago. Factors like open landscape, employee communication and facilities that met the different needs one might have were not elements in which were effecting the design of the building. Using these buildings and trying to make them meet the needs that we have today might turn out to be a real challenge and in some cases, an inefficient solution. Back in the days, having professionals on the design team whose job was to consider the user was not normal. Shockingly, today, that situation has not changed much and is still not something one would consider a given. One of the most common mistakes when designing, or re-designing office buildings today is that the Interior Architect unfortunately gets involved too late. Collaboration across fields is important and a vital part of designing the layout of a building as well as understanding and thinking about the users.

In looking at the example mentioned in chapter 3, “In-between Spaces”: DNB Bjørvika, one can see the important and positive effect of working together across fields. The largest In-between space in this building has been transformed into one of the most popular ways of user circulation within the building as well as a good and efficient platform for spontaneous communication across colleagues.

1: Define the successful elements of the in-between space discussed at DNB Bjørvika. Describe how and why people use it.

2: Extrude the successful elements of the chosen in-between space.

3: Find a building where, as a consequence of not considering the users and the plan layout, the in-between space which is a defining space of the building, is un-successful and not engaging and involving the users. This has to be an existing building as the goal is to redesign the dynamics of the building and give it new life.

4: Take the findings in part 1 and implement them in the building described in part 3.

Note: Do not just implement the elements one finds successful but make them a seamless part of the plan layout. Consider the users and how they would interact with these elements across the different floors.

## CASE STUDY 01, DNB BJØRVIKA

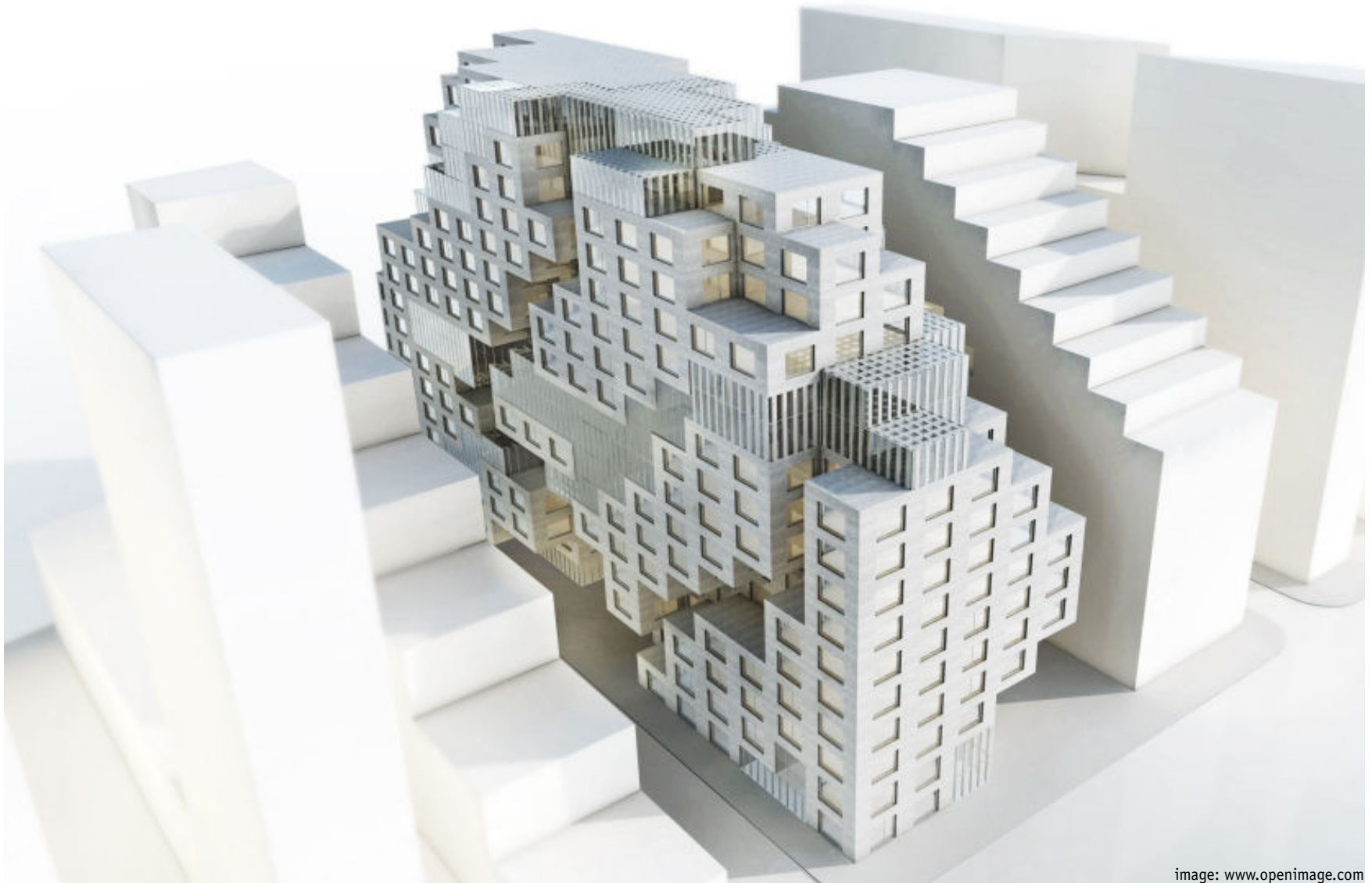


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## DNB BARCODE

The pixilated, 17-storey high building is located in the newly developed part of Oslo called Bjørvika and is one of three buildings that will be upon completion the new headquarters for the Norwegian bank DNB. This specific building, which is located in the middle of the three buildings, has a surface of 36,500m<sup>2</sup> and it is designed by the Dutch company MVRDV and together with the Norwegian companies Dark and a-lab, co-responsible for the three buildings. The pixilated design of the building adapts to the urban context and combines an efficient and flexible internal organization, based on small-scale working areas as well as a variety of communal spaces and a sheltered public passage<sup>25</sup>. The niches of this building, called the rock, provide space for vegetation growth, roof gardens and outside areas on every floor.

Internally, the building contains of more than 2000 flexible workspaces, a massive canteen in the basement connecting all three buildings. A panoramic 140-seat VIP canteen at the top floor, and a trade room placed in the core of the building with 250 workstations. Connecting these elements is a staggered internal route of terraces, wooden bridges and staircases that connect the floors together both inside and outside. The arrangement of this internal route is set so that you can walk up on one side of the building, ending up at the top where the VIP canteen is located, and back down

on the other side of the building. This in-between space works differently from many other buildings. It has been braided around the building very efficiently, keeping traffic and social banter separated from the workspace. It sets a solid foundation for informal meetings as well as encouraging a better communication and sharing of knowledge between the employees.

Every floor has an area with simple kitchen facilities as well as social and casual furniture. This facilitates people wanting a quick break and a coffee as well as smaller

groups wanting to meet up for a quick casual meeting. Social activities occur spontaneously as a direct consequence of people moving about and being in the same space. This implies that social activities are indirectly supported whenever necessary as a result when optional activities are given better conditions<sup>26</sup>.

Being true to the design and the concept behind this routing system, in areas of extreme secrecy, the stairs becomes enclosed but the communication with the different floors is just as strong.



image: [www.openimage.com](http://www.openimage.com)

## METHODS: INTERVIEW

Heidi Tolo has been the project manager for the Interiors of the three DNB buildings due to finalize in May 2013. Talking with her has given great insights to the process as well as a perspective from the eyes of someone who has a lot of experience.

One thing that makes this project stand out compared to so many others is the involvement of the Interior Architects from the very beginning of this project. Due to the early cooperation between the architects and the interior architects, the grid system ended up at 3x3m. This was based upon recommendations from Heidi Tolo and her team from experiences, which they have had on earlier projects. The reason for recommending this grid size is because they find it great for smaller rooms, such as project and focus rooms, as well as it works for larger meeting rooms. In retrospect, some of the meeting rooms might be bigger than is necessary, but for large groups of people sitting in that room for most of the day, it has turned out to have a positive effect. This is just one example of how important involvement of an interior architect is at the very start of the project. By listening to these recommendations, the pixels shaping the building ended up at a size based on the grid system; 6x6meters.

After the move in day in September 2012, the most interesting thing for an Interior

Architect to observe is how the users interpret and use the building. Will they use it the way that was intended? Will they explore, will they be open for different ways of working? All of these questions are buzzing in ones head and only time will show how successful the use is. One thing the team experienced was that there should be a time where no changes will be made in the office layout what so ever. The employees will start to complain, no doubt about it. Suddenly everyone is new at a place, you do not really know where to work and there are new working methods to be explored. Doubt and confusion will

**“How will the users interpret and use the building?”**

definitely spread across the office. Time is essential here, and so is patience. The employees have to trust in the new office layout, and give it a chance before starting to complaint. Also, the management has to be strict enough to say that no changes will be done for a certain amount of time, giving everyone a chance to settle in. Open, clear, timely and relevant communication is imperative and key to an effective staff engagement<sup>27</sup>. This goes for both the time and process before moving to a new location, but it is still just as important when on site at the new office. When an



image: own image



employee have been sheltered in an office for most of their career, the fact that one most likely will find the change to an open landscape stressful is important to remember and understand. In that case it is vital that the management goes ahead as a positive and exciting example for the new office layout and work as an example how one can adapt to a new situation.

In office buildings in general, the elevator is in constant movement. That is the main source of transport for the users when moving around the building. The routing system in the Dnb building has proven to challenge the elevator, making the users more creative in terms of getting around the office. Some people even use it as a way of exercising by walking all the way to the 17<sup>th</sup> floor. By doing so, they are more likely to bump into a colleague, share some information and knowledge as well as keeping their body in movement. Another element to why the routing system is so popular can be because of the natural beauty it is surrounded by, you have a constant view of Oslo. Depending on where you are in the building, you can look out on to the sea and the opera house, up to the hills of Ekeberg or Holmenkollen, or the city itself. The roof on some of the pixels is covered by greenery, which is changing colors depending on the season. It works as an exciting and ever changing backdrop to work areas.

## THE CHOSEN IN-BETWEEN SPACE

After several site visits and talks with Heidi Tolo it became obvious that the in-between space that would require further research and analysis was the routing system. Not only is this space an exciting place within this certain building, but the concept and the ideas behind it is what makes it into a special space. It is not the first time that the architects of this building; MVRDV have created such a space. In 1997 the company VPRO moved from their old premises to what has been called villa VPRO. The Villa can be described as compact because of the absence of long corridors. It has a vast number of different spatial qualities (a large number of different rooms) and in terms of its relationship to the landscape around it the difference between outside and inside is vague. The ever-changing height differences result in a continuous interior. If you combine that with the “wings” which have been created in the gaps, the result is a space with a wide range of different work contexts, which meets the ever-changing demands imposed by VPRO’s business<sup>28</sup>. These are elements as well as a general philosophy which one can draw a resemblance to in the DNB building as well as several MVRDV buildings. The concept of a vague difference between the inside and the outside as well as flexible spaces are strongly represented in the routing system.

Not only is the space beautiful with its transparency framing the surroundings,

showing off a city and a landscape with its seasonal changes, but it is the excitement with the users as well as the flexibility within the space which makes it into an interesting space for this thesis. Taking a necessary space which demands quite a high number of square meters and making it into a space which is so flexible one does not think of it in one certain way makes it into a space that is always changing and forever interesting.

Images showing 3d renderings of the building. In red the routing system is highlighted, showing how it spans over the entire building.

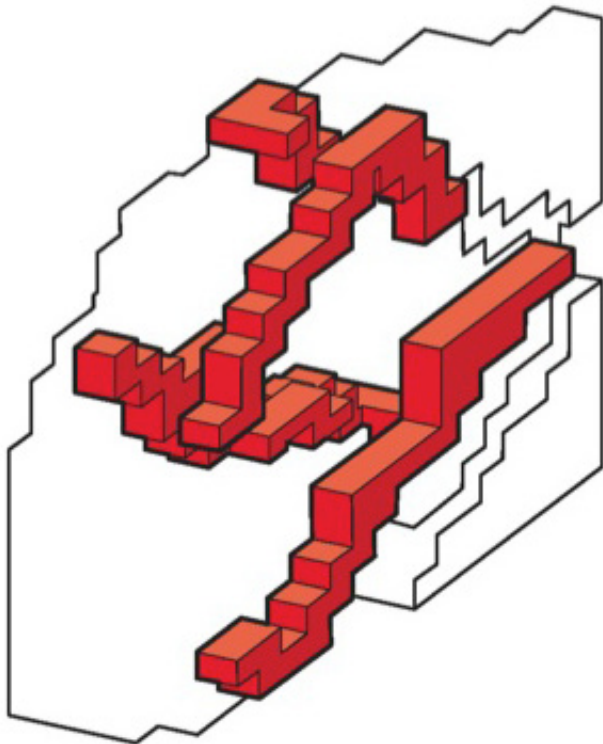


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## METHOD: OBSERVATION\_MULTI PURPOSE USE.

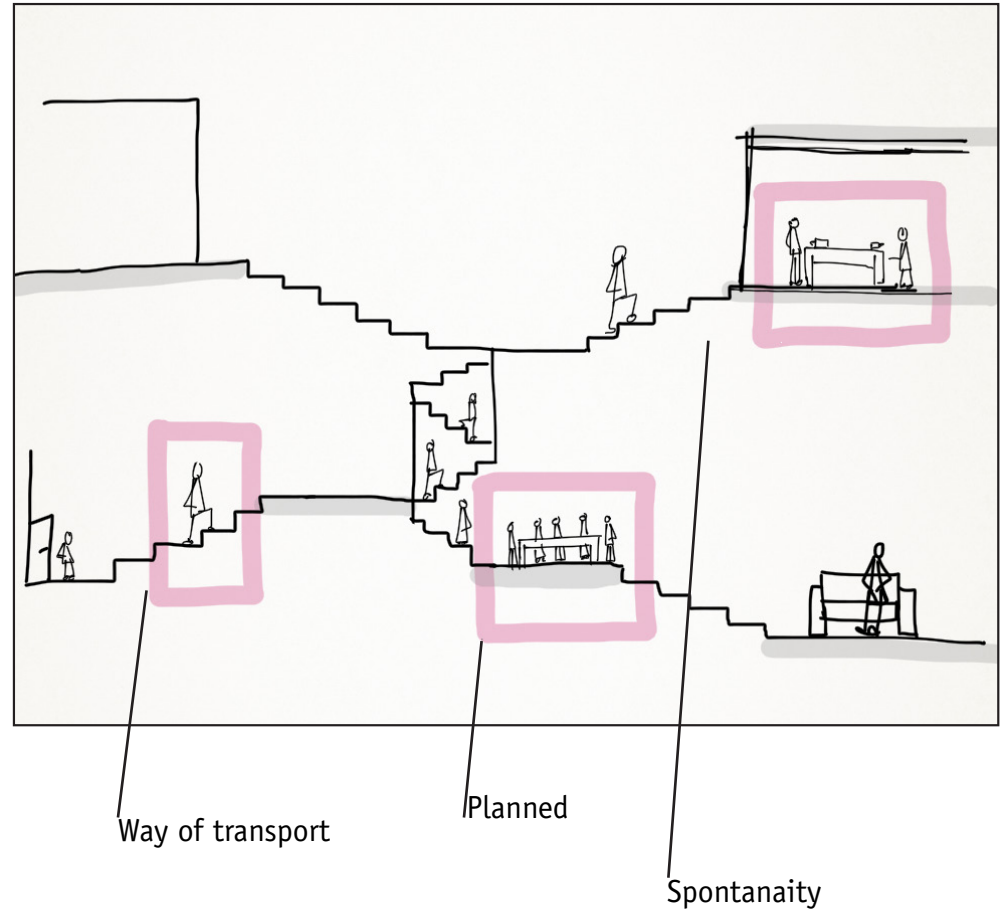
After hanging out in the routing system and observing the users from a distance, you can break down the reason behind a certain action into three.

**WAY OF TRANSPORT:** The routing system is a connector of all floors. In this “transport line” there are areas that facilitates a coffee break, an informal meeting or a relaxed area for small talk. The users might use the routing system as a way to get to a different floor, but also as a space where they can take five min brake from a hectic workday.

**PLANNED:** Certain areas of the routing system can be used in a planned way. There are places which are great for morning meetings, weather this would be a small or a large group. The VIP canteen on the 17<sup>th</sup> floor is great for a special lunch with invited guests where other areas are suited for a relaxed chat for a group working on a specific project.

**SPONTANAITY:** Working in an open environment, decisions can more easily be made on a spontaneous basis. The routing system is great for this. Because it has so many different elements meeting the different needs of the users, one is more likely to bump into a colleague. A meeting can be arranged, a quick meeting can be held without any preparation, knowledge is spread easily and you see the faces of

your colleagues more easily then if one only belonged on one floor or was sat in a cellular office.





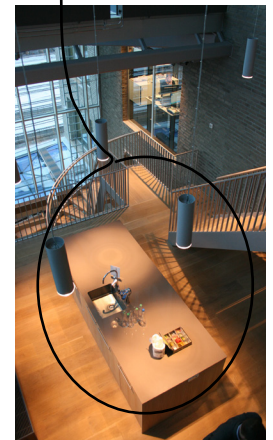
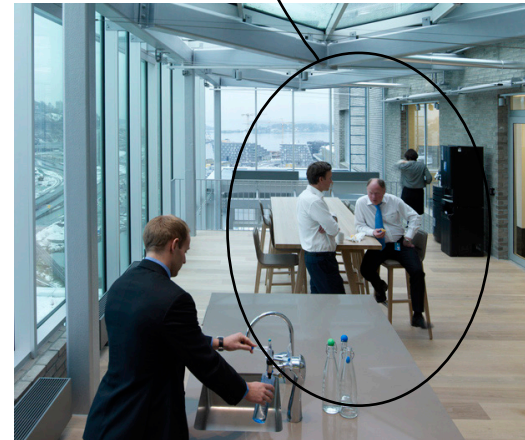
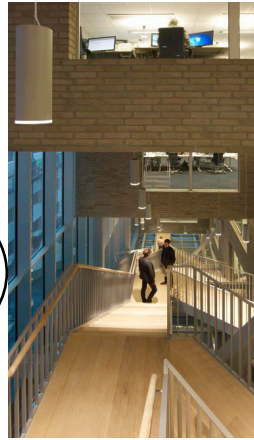
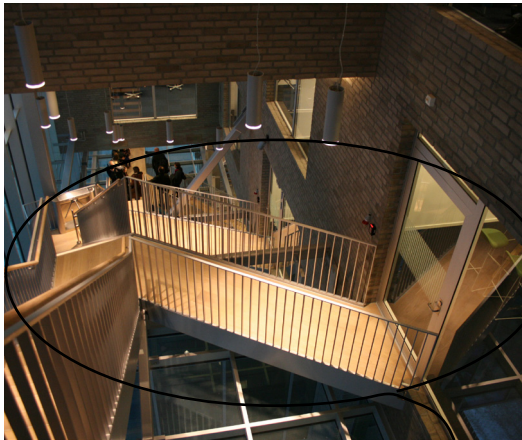
## METHOD: OBSERVATION\_ELEMENTS THAT BRINGS PEOPLE OUT.

The reason behind why people use the routing system is numerous. We can break them down into: **Soft seating, Ad hoc, Kitchen needs, fresh air and transport.** These are all different reasons why people would be on the move, but they all bring the users out in the same area. By having so many different reasons why one would be moving around in the routing system, more people would use it, which will result in a

bigger chance of bumping into a colleague.

The efficiently in the space is also a quality to notice. One space is not necessarily devoted to one action resulting in a bigger variety in the use of a space. The fact that one space can be a kitchen, a hang out area and a meeting space makes the routing system an extremely space efficient area of the building.

Another quality and one element, which can be an important factor in why the space is so popular, might be the materiality. There is a clear and noticeable difference between the routing system and the different zones within that space compared to the different areas of the work-zone. The routing system has a homely feel to it with its exposed bricks as well as wooden elements bringing in a lot of warmth. The furniture facilitates



A way of moving around the building-----Bumping into a colleague-----A spontaneous meeting-----Coffee brake-----

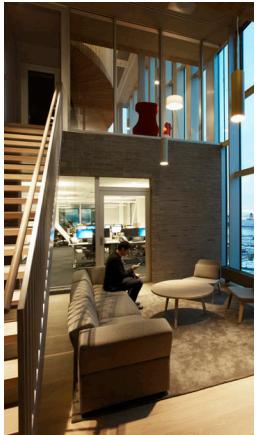
Transport

a social and laid-back atmosphere giving the users the possibility for a different posture than when within the work-zone. Encouraging relaxation amid a stressful and strained work environment by providing spaces for reflection, which works as a temporary escape proves to be productive for the employees<sup>29</sup>. Overall, in the routing system the colours and the materiality have a warm and calm undertone to it.

In the workspace on the other hand, the pallet is much colder. Blue is a stand out colour and variations of blue are what have been used in all of the furniture as well as the carpet. The big difference in these two spaces achieves a big effect on the users. For many this might be unconscious and something you cannot really put your finger on but there is a great difference in the way one feels in the two different areas.

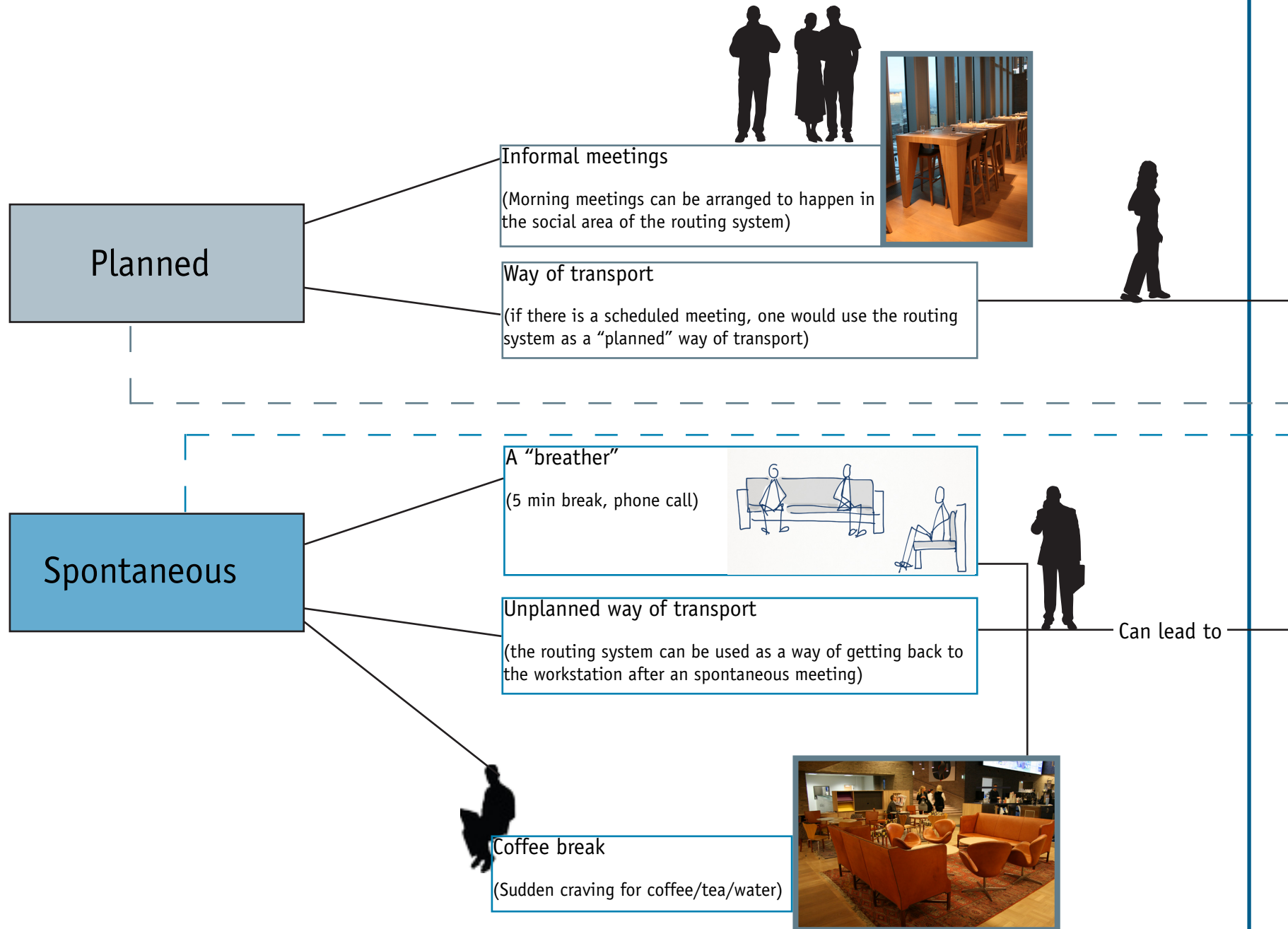
Separating the feelings one has within one space is a clever way to differentiate the different areas. This might also help the users to use the different spaces in a more clever way. When in the work-zone one works, when in the routing system, one can relax and take a personal phone call.

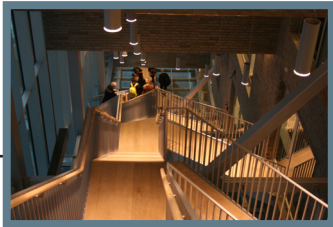
Soft seating



-----A phonecall-----A place for a calmness-----Back to the desk-----Fresh air-----

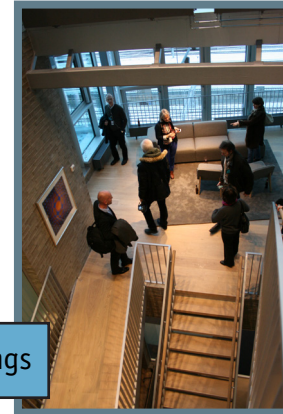
## METHOD: MAPPING\_FINDINGS





Can lead to

Spontaneous meetings



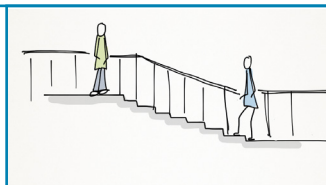
Bumping into people



Sharing of knowledge

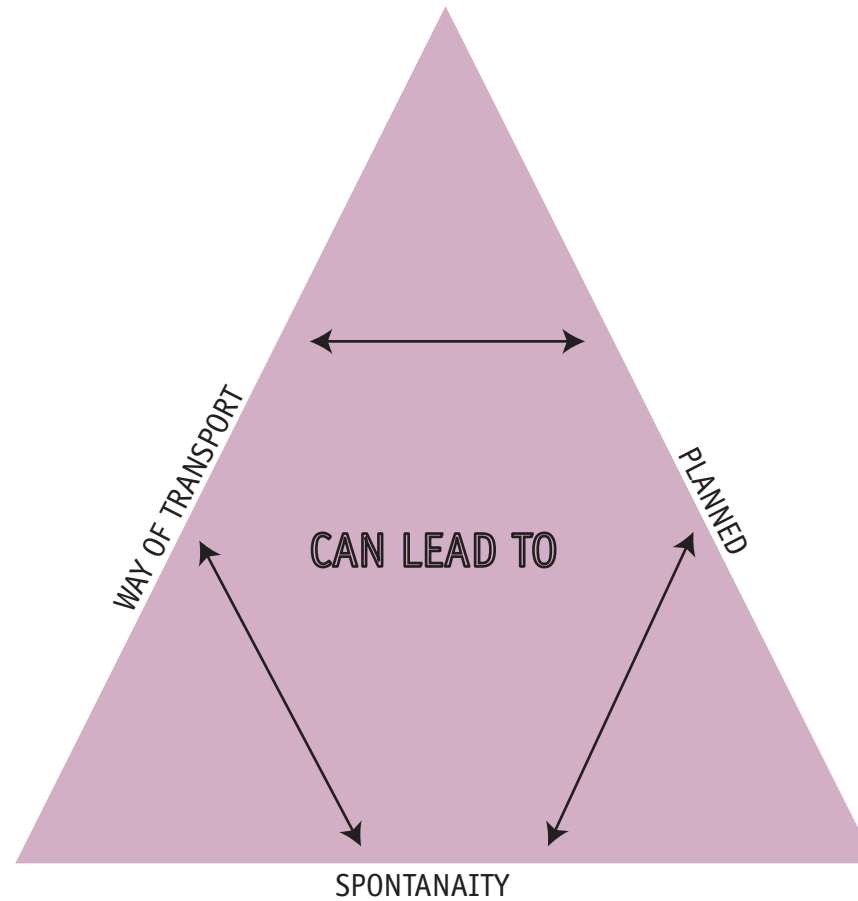


Arranging a meeting



## METHOD: MAPPING

Model shows how one action can lead to another as a result of the space working as a base for several different scenarios.





## CASE STUDY 02, KONGENSGATE 18-20



image: [www.dark.no](http://www.dark.no)

## KONGENSGATE 18-20

Case study: Kongensgate 18-20 is a combination of two buildings. Kongensgate 20 was enlisted in 1894, created by the architect Henrik Nissen in the Neo-Renaissance style. Large damages were caused by a fire in 1903 and parts of the building had to be redone. Finished in 1925, a beautiful Neo-Classical building designed by the architect Kristian Biong spans from the street at the end of the block, Kirkegata 21 up to Kongensgate 20. What is characteristic for the building is the old bank room, a double height marble space with a beautiful glass ceiling that gives the room aesthetic as well as beautiful architectural qualities.

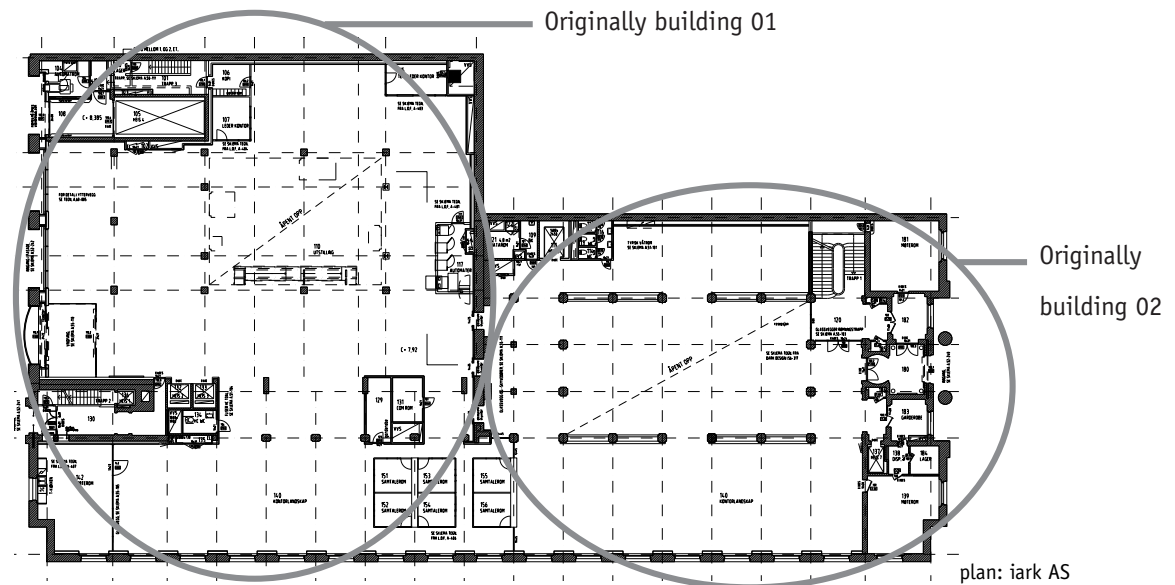
In 1975 the two buildings were built together on every floor, and today it works as one building. In 2004, the Norwegian bank DNB decided to move into this building and make it to their headquarters. The building at that time came across as very outdated with elements such as ventilation, technical systems, toilet capacity and natural light in need of an update. For such a company as DNB, the overall plan solution also needed a thorough evaluation.

Dark Architects, the office responsible for this job decided to focus on the original qualities of the building and the importance in recreating the architectural and historical elements of the house<sup>30</sup>. The original atrium

in Kongensgate 20 was opened up with glass walls, balcony boxes and a staircase for internal connections. The building today works as one building mass where you can clearly see the divide of the two original buildings. Facades and other valuable features have been kept and restored.



image: own image



## METHOD: OBSERVATION\_CURRENT SITUATION

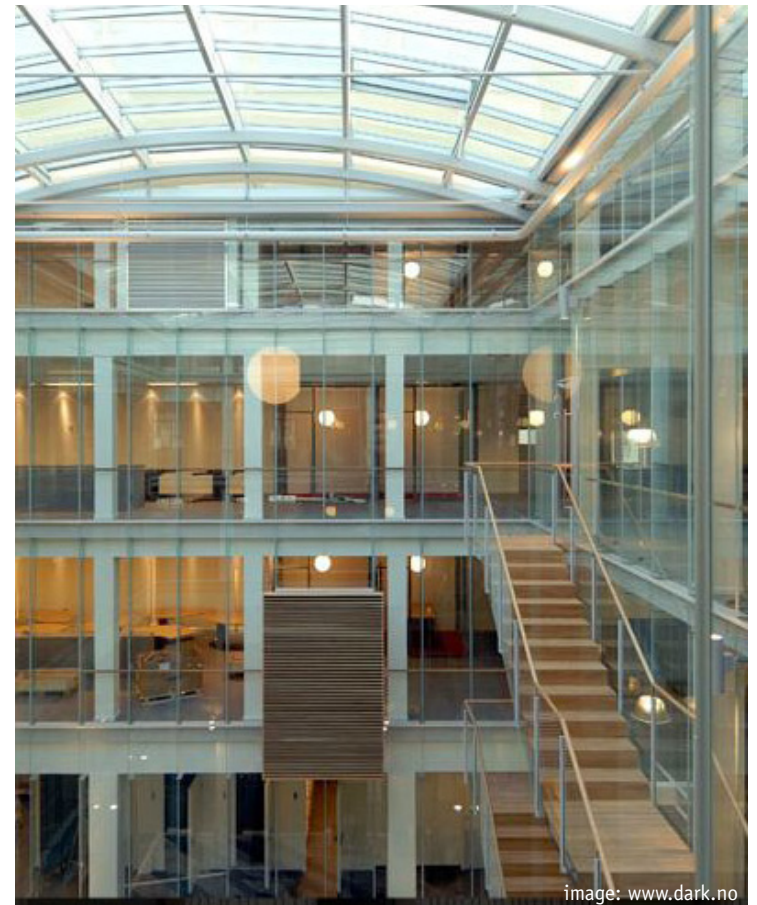
When the building was restored so that it would fit the needs of the new inhabitants, the Norwegian bank: Dnb, one big change that was done was with the atrium as described earlier. Interestingly enough, these element does not seem to be very successful. The glass walls bring a large amount of natural light into the building, which is positive. The glass box and the staircase had the best of intentions, but unfortunately they do not add much to the quality of space. One would assume that the architect had an intention of these new elements in the atrium being interactive and the users being creative in the way they are interpreted and used. The problem is that at the end of the day, the elements are not being used. In the end they are elements that are there and even though

they have a function, they end up being “just” a decorative element in the atrium instead of a functional one.

The reasons why these elements would not be described as successful can be discussed and debated for and against. The arguments in this thesis are based on observation and talks with other interior architects. When we look at the findings in case study 01, we see that one factor in achieving a number of users to be out in the routing system at the same time is that the space connects more than two floors. It facilitates different needs as well as being a space for interpretation. When using the routing system to get to a different floor you can get a cup of coffee, sit down for a quick phone call or bump into a colleague. These are just examples of what can happen, the important factor being that it is possible. In case study 02, examples like mentioned above are less likely to happen because there is only one reason why one would be in a specific space. You would be in the staircase because you have to be on a different floor, you would be in the kitchen area because you need refreshments or you would use one of the boxes because you need a quiet space to take a phone call. If you were to bump into a colleague in one of these spaces the reason why that would happen is because that person is in the space for the same reason as you. When the

space only facilitates one need, it will not be a part of defining the dynamics of the building seeing as the reason one would have to be in that certain space is static. This makes it difficult to meet a person that is in that particular space for a different reason than you.

Therefore, as a result of the lack of reasons to be in one space, it is not an exciting space as well as people does not feel the urge to use it.



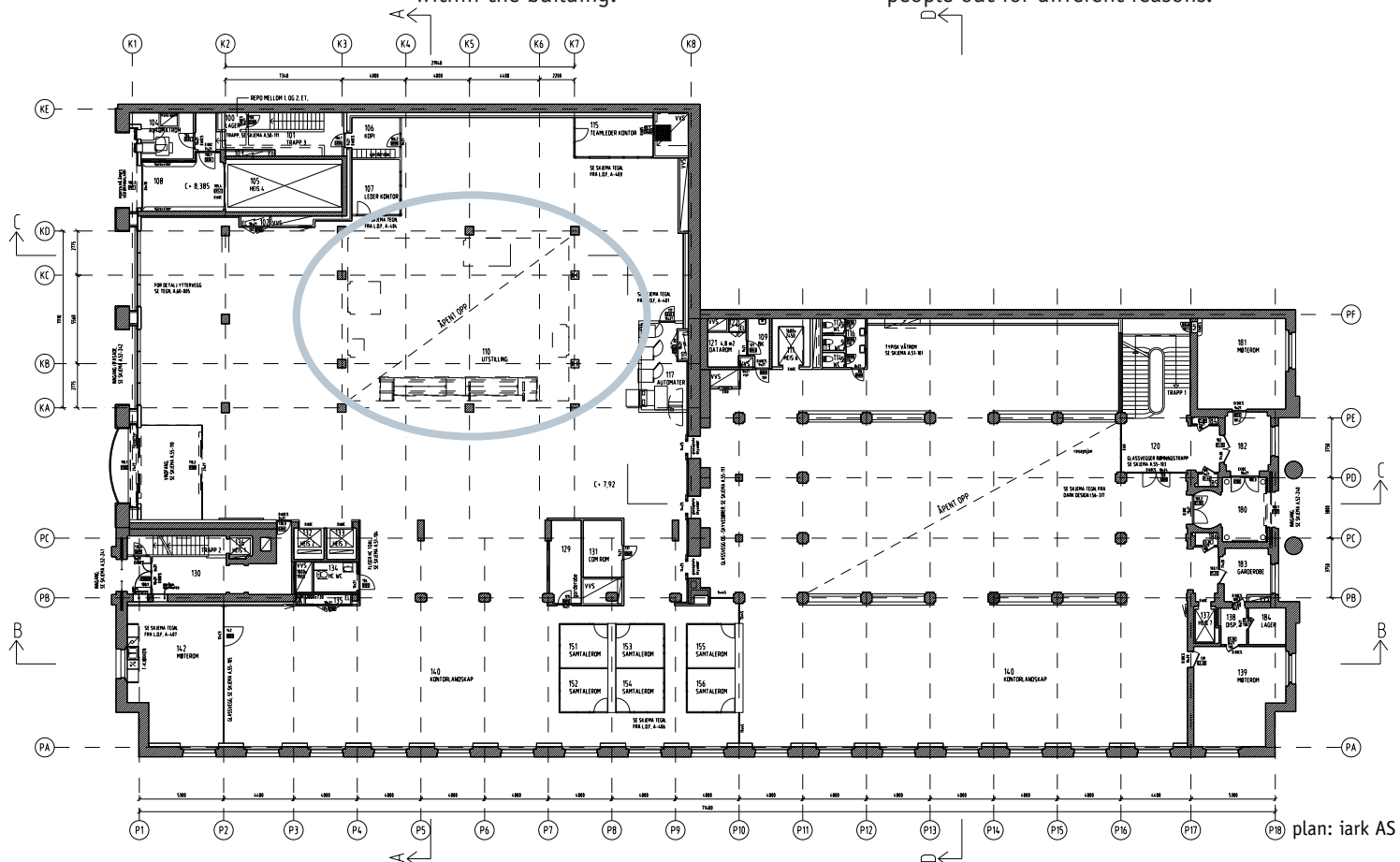


## METHOD: OBSERVATION\_CHOSEN IN-BETWEEN SPACE

The chosen In-between space, in this building, which this thesis has focused on, is the atrium in the part of the building that is in then Neo-Renaissance style. This atrium spans from the ground floor, up through all of the floors, with a glass ceiling bringing in a lot of natural light. When the building was renovated in 2004, a few adjustments were made to the atrium to create a better working environment and communication across the different floors.

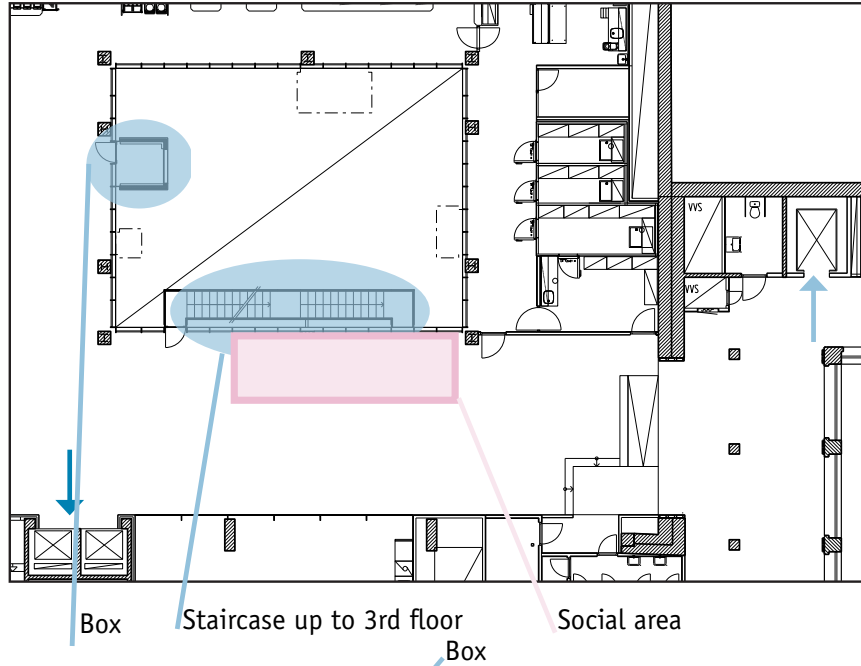
The intention was good, but unfortunately it has proven unsuccessful. The glass boxes are not in use or if they are, they are used as storage. Understandably that is not a flattering view for anyone. The staircases, which connect two and two floors together, are not in use. It seems easier for the users to take the elevators instead of the staircase. This is a great waste of space as well as a missed opportunity of efficiency within the building.

The illustrations below and on the next page show the atrium with the placement of the glass boxes and the staircases. What is also shown is where the elevator is, giving an understanding of where in the building the users have access to the different floors, as well as showing where the coffee bar is placed. The coffee bar is important in understanding the dynamics of the floor and the placement of such elements that attract people out for different reasons.

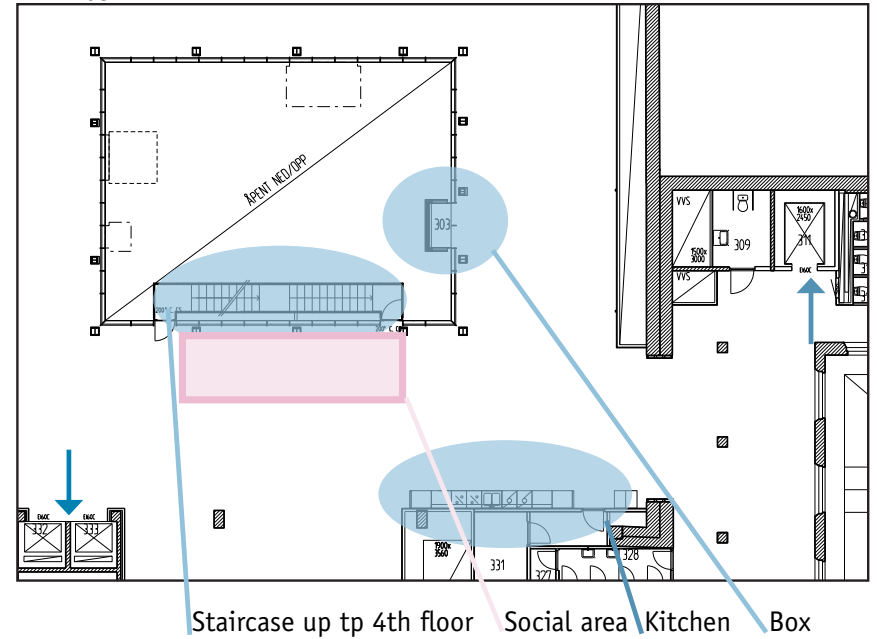


# METHOD: MAPPING\_CURRENT\_SITUATION

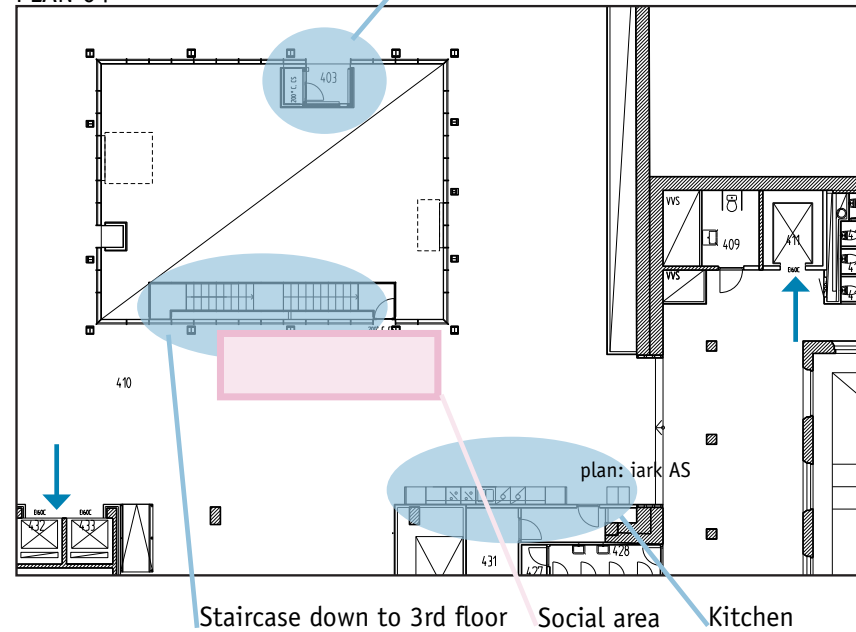
PLAN 02



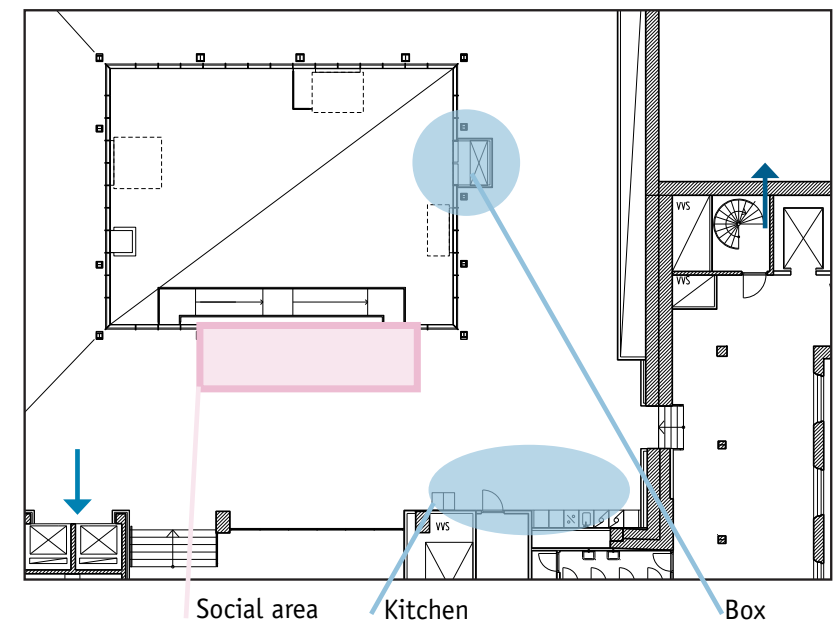
PLAN 03



PLAN 04



PLAN 05



## METHOD: OBSERVATION\_PROBLEM AREAS

- Distance between elements.
- The boxes are too small. People feel cramped when inside them. Have ended up being used as storage instead.
- The staircase starts on the second floor. As a result the users have to get to this floor or floors above to take advantage of the internal staircases.
- The staircase only connects two floors at one time. To reach the staircase leading you to the next floor you have to walk from one end of the atrium to the other.
- The user would only be at one place for one reason at any time.



image: own image



image: www.dark.no

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION OF CASE STUDY 01 & 02.

Case study 01 and 02 has proven to be two very different studies. They are both a classic example of what can go wrong and what can be done right when it comes to an office building and the in-between space within one such place. One represents the present, how we work and collaborate across different fields to come up with the best possible end product. The other is an example how buildings were designed in the past and how the users were not always a big consideration in the design. The findings show that by examining both buildings one gets a better understanding of the two different spaces and a better foundation to reflect on the situation. In this thesis it has been mentioned and discussed how the in-between space is a necessary ingredient in a building. It can work either as a way to create distance but also as an overlapping element between the different spaces in a building. What becomes obvious in these two case studies is that even though the in-between space is a needed space, it does not mean that it is a highly considered area. No matter which side you sit on at the table, whether you are an architect, interior architect or the costumer, forgetting what combines and binds all the other elements of an building together proves to be forgotten in some cases.

It is interesting to witness how a building can affect people and how it can change how the users feel, behave and relate to their workplace. As discussed earlier, many people do identify themselves more with their profession and less with their employer and place of work. What happens with the employees when they start to more and more identify themselves with the place they work? In case study 01 that can be a possibility and it will be interesting to see how the users feel about their office and if they identify themselves with their work more after the workplace situation has changed.

The challenge is, to have a building as discussed in case study 02 and to try to create a dynamic such as in case study 01. It is important to mention that the in-between space in case study 02 is a topic for improvement because of the current situation and the potential it has. The emphasis is on improving an already existing space. To use the skills and wisdom one has to make a situation better instead of just focusing on new buildings and new spaces. If older buildings will have a chance to keep up with new architecture it is important that internally the buildings get improved to reach their potential instead of ending up being undesirable compared to newer buildings. Further on in this thesis, that will be the focus. It has never been an intention to create a good in-between

space from scratch, the focus has always been on already existing buildings and their potential for improvement.

# CHAPTER 04

## the design

Based upon the findings collected in case study 01 and 02, a product has been developed. This product has not been based upon one special user group where their needs and criteria's have been met. In the office there will be, no matter what kind of profession we are talking about, always at least one common denominator. When talking about space or time, this common denominator will always be the in-between space. As discussed earlier in this thesis thresholds and transitions are spaces which often serve as boundaries between intended places as well as connecting the other elements of an office space together.

Because this product is based upon the building and not one specific user, the end result is something that can be implemented in buildings that has the same problem as discovered in case study 02.



## CHOSEN SPACE: PROBLEM AREAS

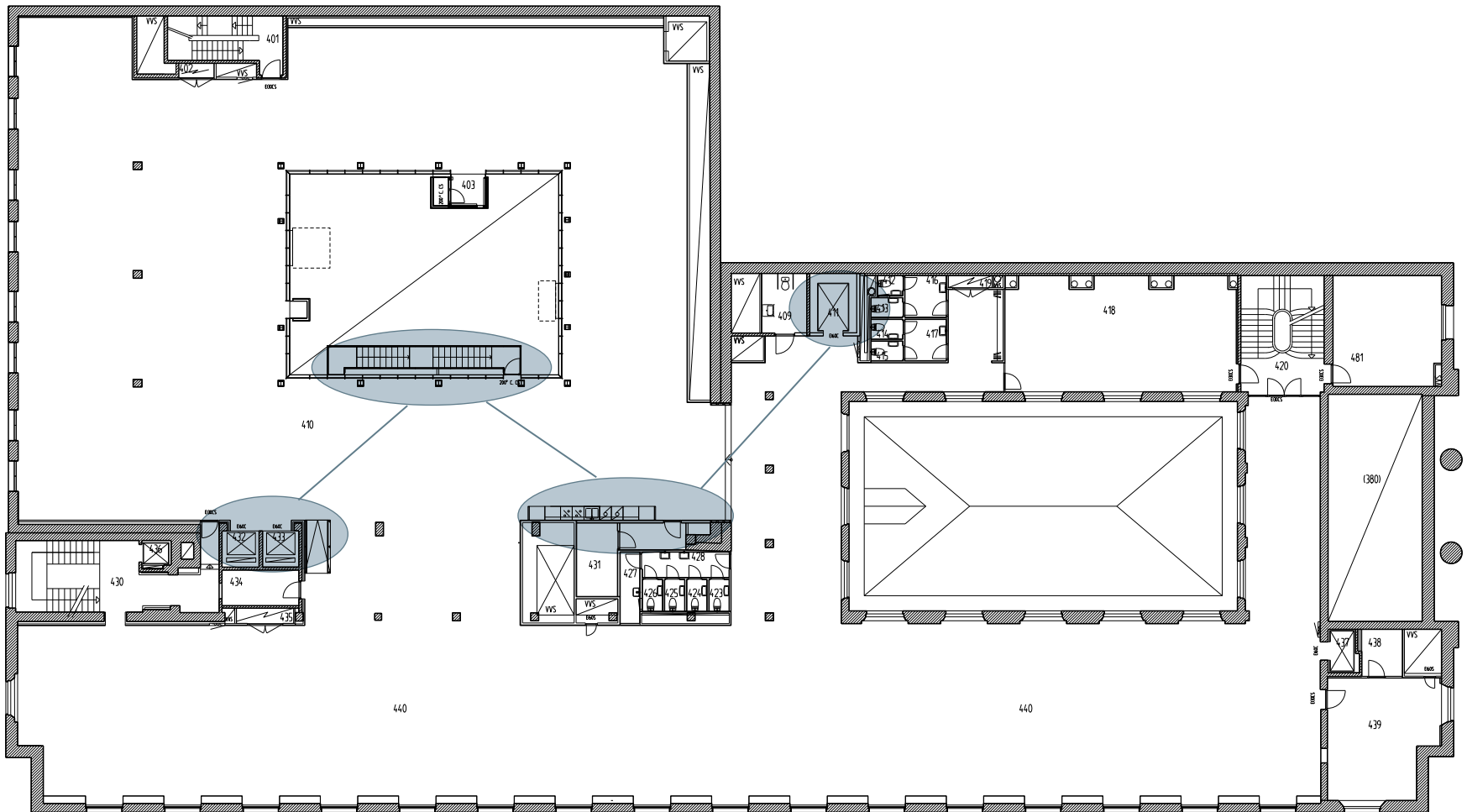
The space (the atrium) was created with the intention to bring light into the building. When the building was renovated, the architect added some elements into this open space with the intention of higher connection between the floors. This has unfortunately been unsuccessful. What are the reasons behind this space not being user involving? What can be done so that

the initial intention of the space and a higher user connection between the floors will be improved?

Instead of letting the space be, this product chooses to keep the initial thoughts from the architects and what was intended with the space, but use the findings from case study 01 to redesign the space with a better understanding of the elements that can

help improve the space.

The re-design of the in-between space aim to not only to create a better flow between the different floors but also add more reasons why one would use the space. The overall plan will be looked at as well as considering the how the design that is connected with the atrium will affect the rest of the floor plan.



plan: iark AS

## INSPIRATION: EXCESS SPACE

As discussed earlier in this thesis, the creation of an in-between space is often the reaction of the creation of a different space. This image shows how the definition of a space can freely be decided by how you choose to define it with e.g. furniture. The

power of an in-between space and what makes it interesting is the designer's choice to define the space. Looking at the rest of the building and the surrounding areas the needs has to be found. When looking at this picture, the space was a landfill, nothing

special. By adding a group of chairs, it suddenly becomes something different. The chairs create a social area, a place where people can interact and discuss. It goes from being an undefined space to a space, which is possible to define.



www.martela.com

How was this space created?  
How best to use it?

Something (a chair)  
suggesting an action

Different furniture,  
different action

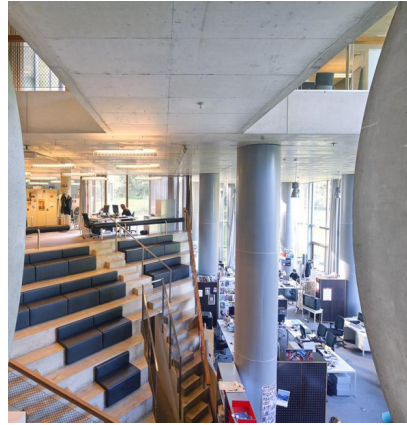
A space without an "action label"

## INSPIRATION

In looking at the chosen space in a new way, it has been important, not only to refer to case study 01, but to look at other buildings where the in-between space and user circulation is a vital part of the building. These buildings have not only been

selected because of the dynamics of the buildings, but because three out of four buildings have different users. Looking at the space with different users in mind has been interesting, but at the same time not an important factor in any of the buildings.

### VILLA VPRO-MVRDV



images: [www.mvrdv.nl](http://www.mvrdv.nl)

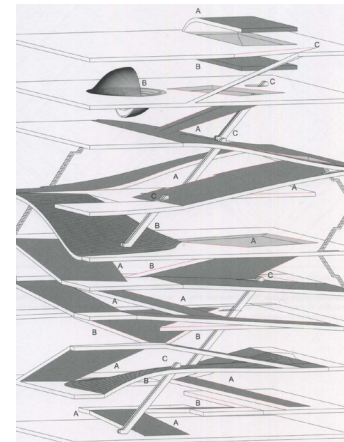
Villa Vpro could be described as compact because of the absence of corridors. It has a high quality of different spaces as well as being a building that blends in with its surroundings. The ever-changing height differences result in a continuous interior. If you combine that with the “wings” which have been created in the gaps, the result is a space with a wide range of different work contexts, which sits there to facilitate the users.

### JUSSIEU LIBRARY-OMA



image: [www.oma.eu](http://www.oma.eu)

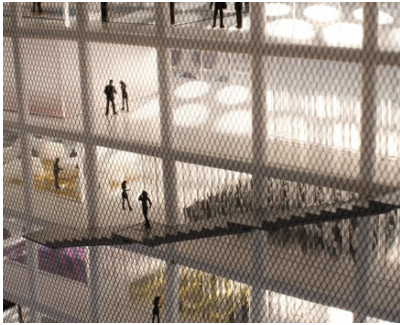
Rather than stacking one level on top of another the floor plans at Jussieu are manipulated to connect, forming an interior boulevard that winds its way through the entire building. The way the levels have been manipulated with the floors below and above, together with the effect of the levels inhabited becomes almost like a street, a theme that influenced the interpretation. Urban elements were added to build on the theme that was the street: plazas, parks, monumental staircases, cafes and shops.



<http://representation3.blogspot.no/>



## CHU HAI COLLEGE-OMA

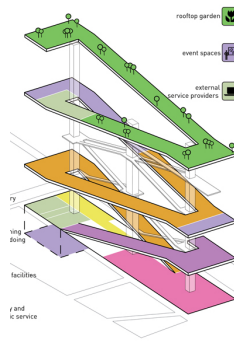


75% of the building space is concentrated in two parallel horizontal slabs. The slabs are connected with a “mat” of stairs and platforms that criss-cross between the buildings, creating a circulation space for the campus.

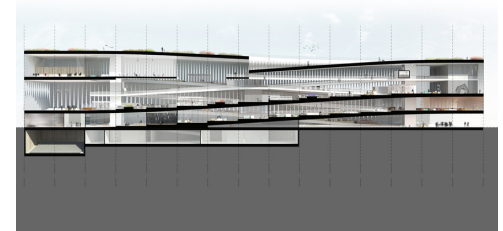


<http://oma.eu/>

## HELSINKI PUBLIC LIBRARY-JDS

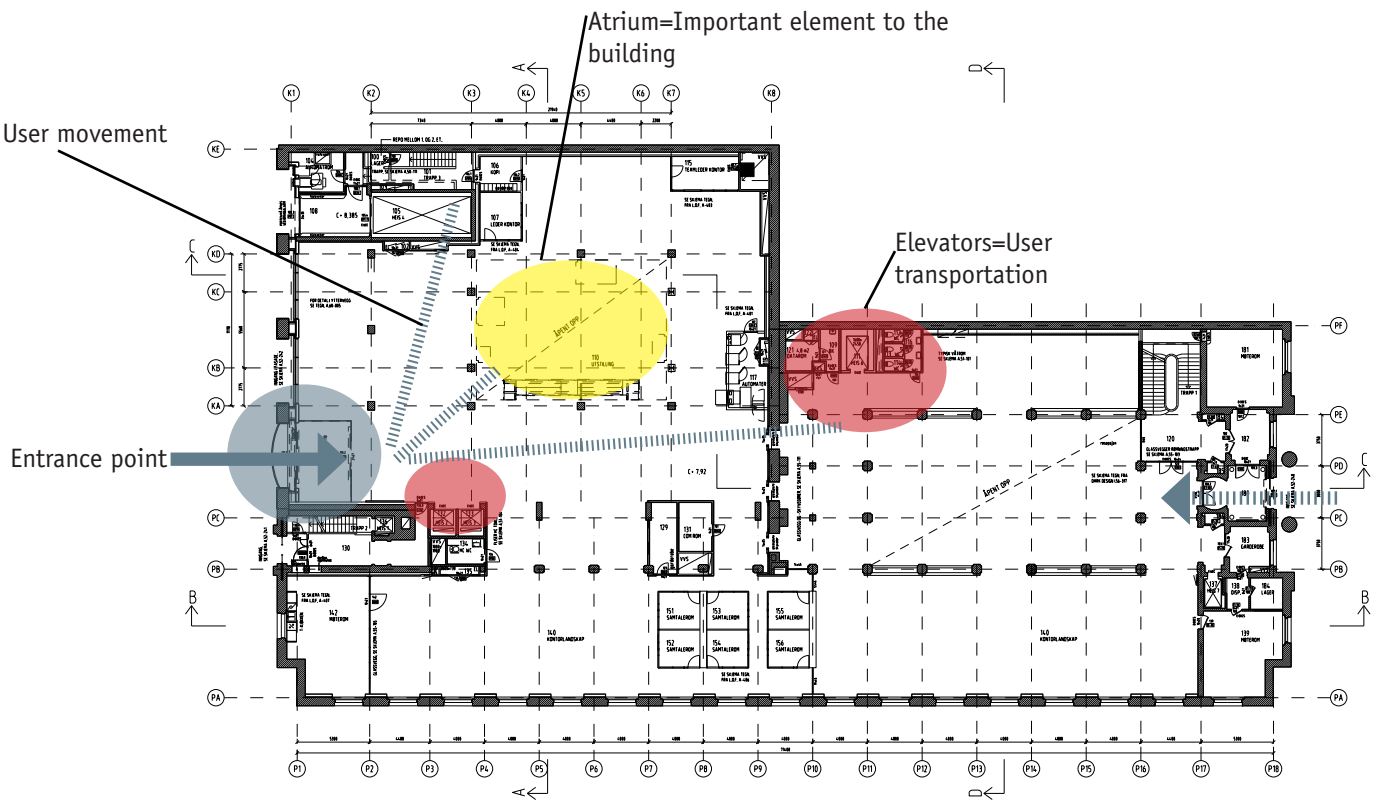


The proposal, which JDS entered in the competition for Helsinki's new public library, is designed as a permeable, transparent and inviting new library. By creating a promenade throughout the building, JDS wished to create a space that is flexible and adaptable over time, accommodating the different needs and activities a modern library requires.

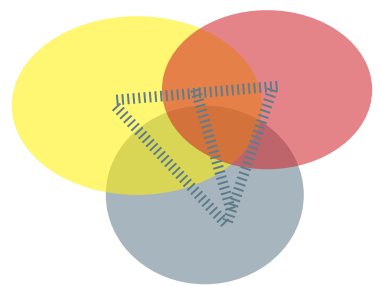


<http://jdsa.eu/hpl/>

# SITE ANALYSIS: CURRENT SITUATION



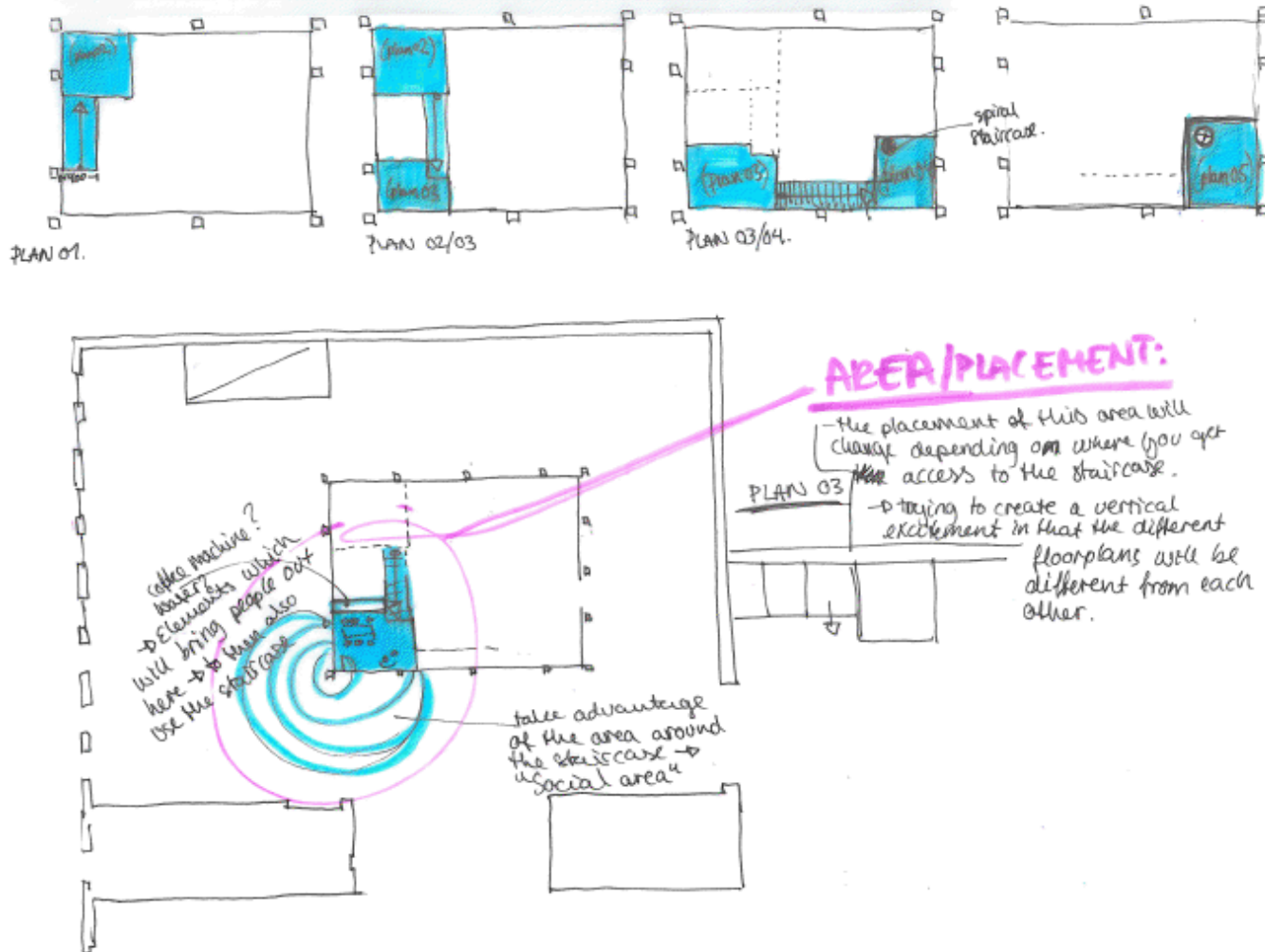
Goal: To create a design where the different elements are intertwined.



## SKETCHING

In the sketching process it has been important to try to look at the space with a fresh pair of eyes. Not following the placement of the existing stairs and trying to think of a possible user route have been the important starting point. Further on, the placement of the stairs and how they connect with the different floors has been

important. It has always been essential that the area where the social activity will happen on the different floors is linked in a natural way with the rest of the floor plan.

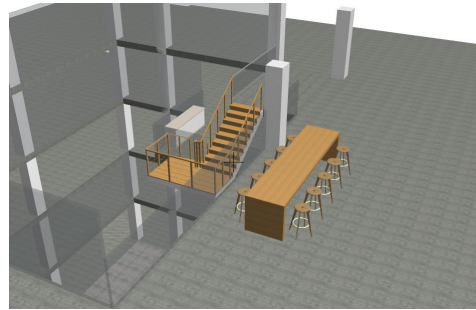
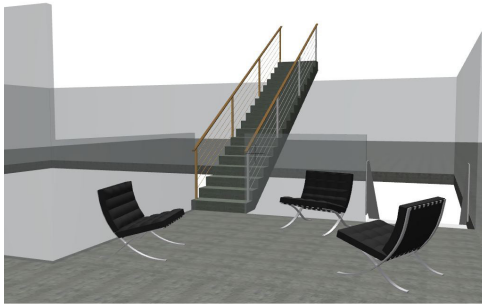


## PROCESS

In the process of developing the design it has been important to try to imagine how the users would respond to the different spaces. Entrance point, different needs one has when coming in to the office in the morning and possible scenarios within the different floors has all been a part of shaping the design. How can the findings best be implemented into the building and moulded to fit the parameters? How can the

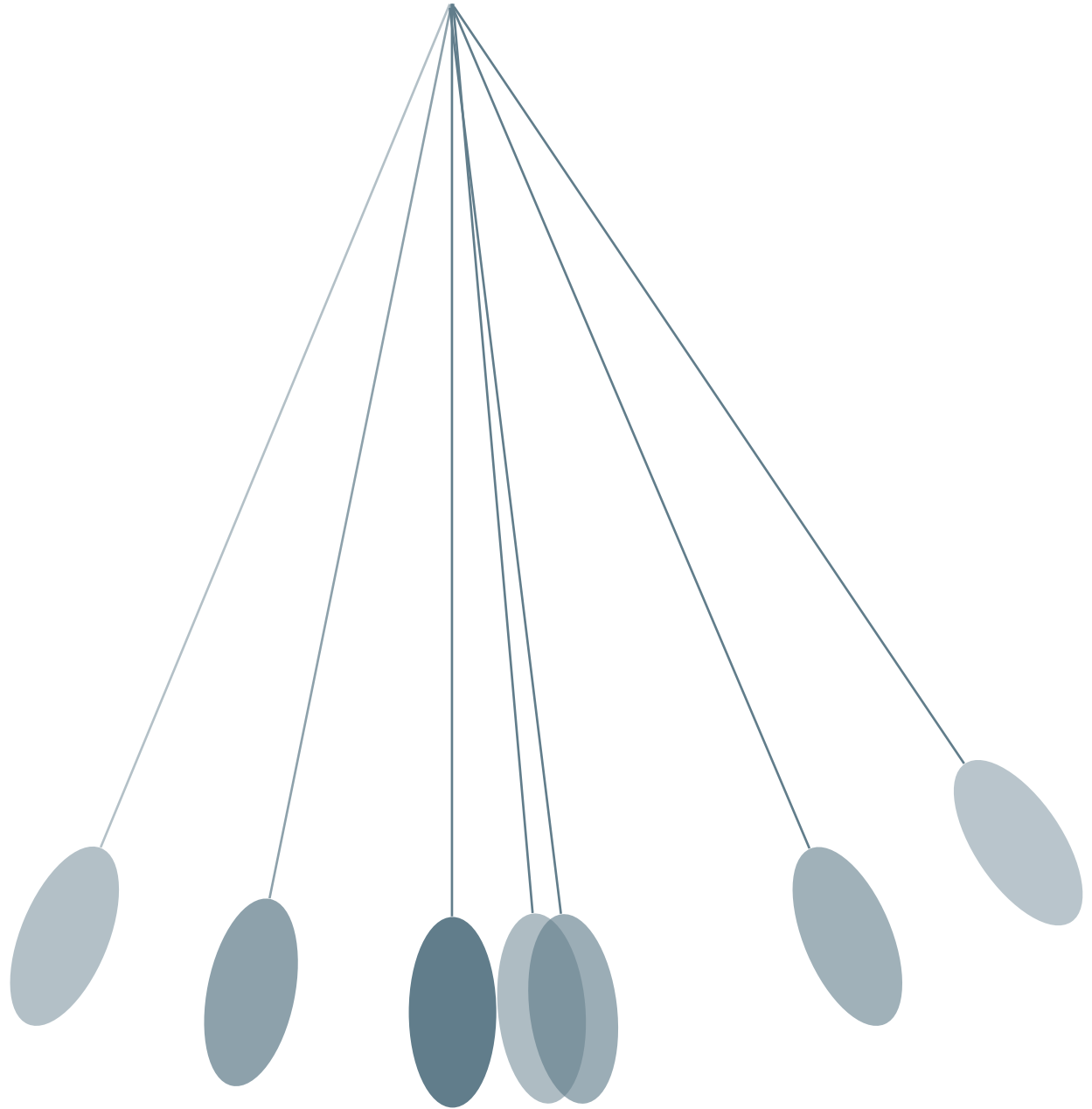
transition between the in-between space and the action that happens there work together with the remaining area around the atrium in the best possible way?

Sketching has been a part of the process, but more than anything, the end result has been a working process while creating the model. The end product is far from the starting point as a result of a continuous scenario work.



## SKETCHING: CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

Like a pendant, the basis and starting point of this design is to have a strong sense of gravity, a solid foundation. This will happen on the ground floor, at the bottom of the atrium. To draw the users into the atrium and to encourage social interactions different social settings will be provided for. Not only will it facilitate interaction on the ground floor, it will work as a magnet towards the routing system leading the users further up in the building.





## PLAN OVERVIEW

Before diving into one plan, seeing an overview plan of the in-between space is essential. Even though one plan alone is important, it is the vertical movement that will create room for better communication across the different floors and employees. The product and the result of one can best be understood by stepping back and looking at all floors together.

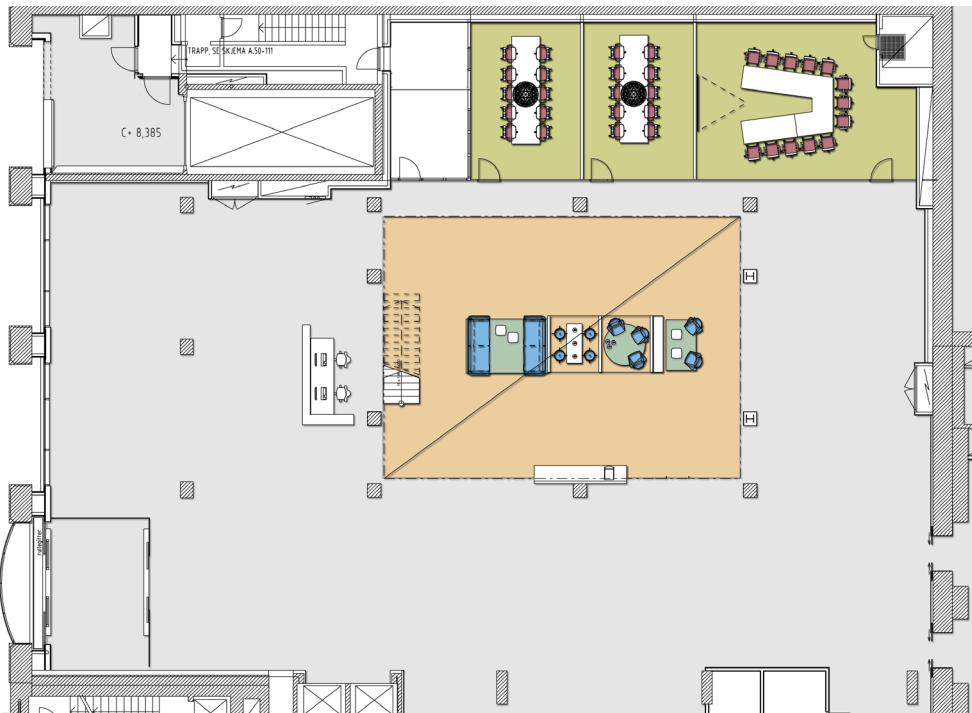


## PLAN 01

To achieve a sense of gravity in the vertical communication of the building a social area has been created in close range to the starting point of the staircase. The social area facilitates for small meetings as well as casual sit-downs. Meeting rooms has also been placed in this area. This gives the users an opportunity the keep guests at a distance from the working areas as well as bringing them straight into a social area that sets the tone of the building straight away.

The first thing many people crave in the morning when coming into work is a cup of coffee. Bearing that in mind, a coffee

bar has been placed in this area with the intention of bringing in another reason to pull people in to the atrium. When in the atrium, the energy in the building is very visible. No matter whether you are a guest or one of the employees, seeing this will no doubt affect the users. By having a number of reasons why one would find their need met at the starting point of the routing system, the users will more likely use the staircase to get to their floor rather than walking to a different area of the building to use the elevators.

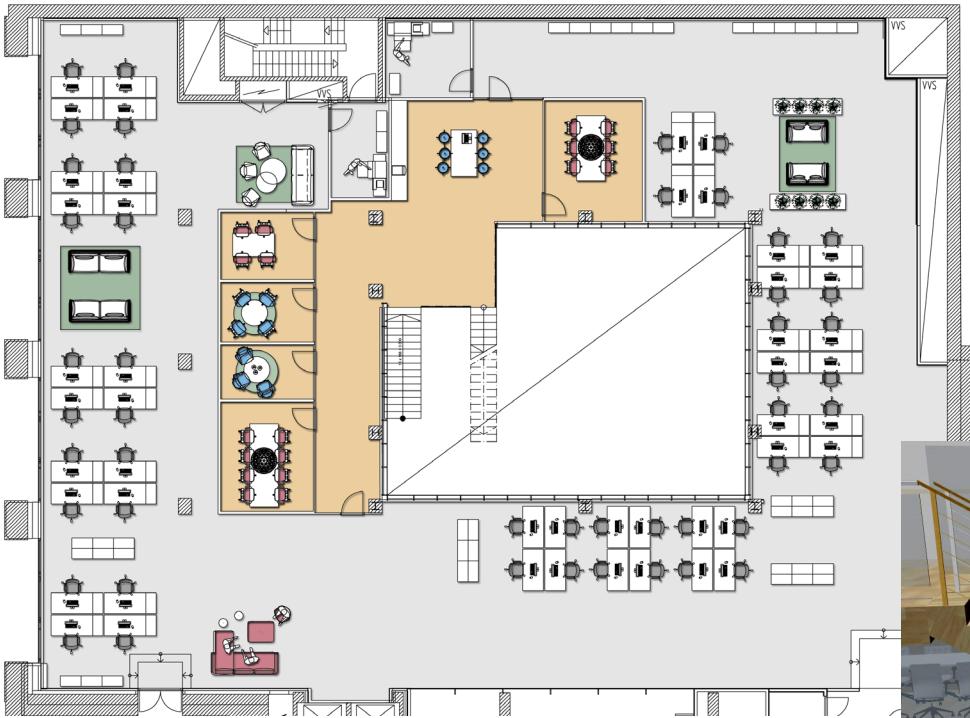




## PLAN 02

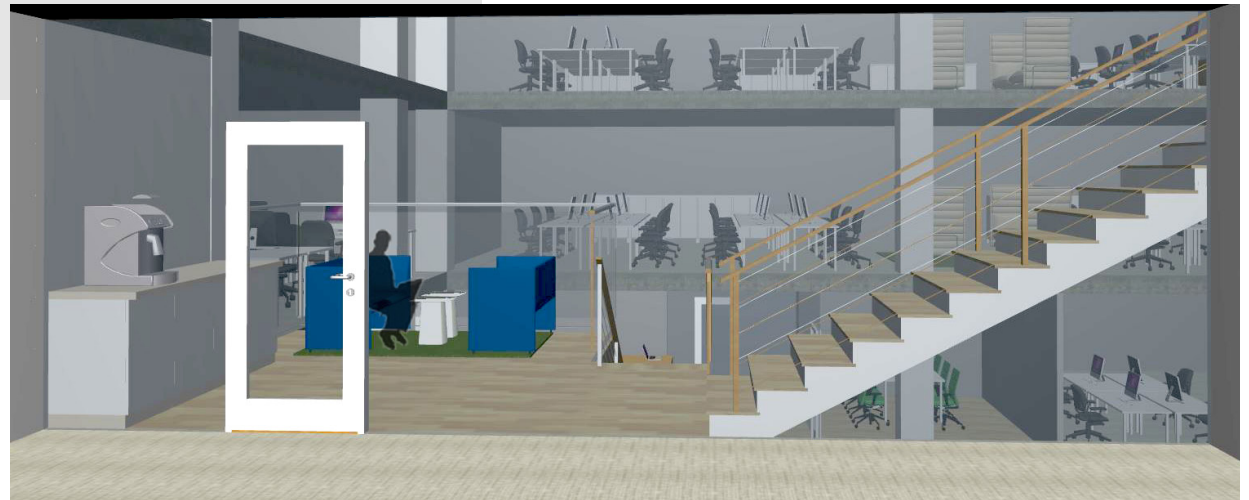
When entering plan 02 you are met by three choices. You can continue up to the third floor, grab some refreshments or go into one of the meeting rooms that have been located in close range to the routing system. The reason behind placing these rooms on the second floor is that you can bring guests into the building, let them

see and feel the energy of the office but at the same time avoid taking them into the areas of the building that is for employees mainly.



## PLAN 03

When moving further up in the building, it facilitates more and more for the users. As with the other floors you can choose to continue further up in the building or sit down for some refreshments. When stepping out of the routing system, you move into the working area of the floor.





## PLAN 04

This part of the routing system facilitates not only for refreshments but also for meetings. Inside the enclosed area of the routing system on this level there are two meeting rooms. These have been placed here to keep the noise level in the working zones down.



## PLAN 05

On the fifth floor the social area extends more into the floor plan compared to some of the other floors. This has the intention to some extent as the situation on the ground floor, to pull people upwards. The social scene is somewhat bigger, it facilitates for different scenarios as well as it being different from the scenarios on the other floors.



## ONE SPACE, MULTIPLE USE

When looking at the findings in case study 01 and why a space is successful, it was obvious that having a number of reasons why one could find their needs met an important factor in the creation of these spaces. At any level of the routing system the users are met by a number of facilities and choices. This is to collect the reasons why one would be in a certain space to achieve a communal area for the employers. The higher the number of reasons one would be in a space, the more likely you are to want/need to go there.

Coffee

User circulation

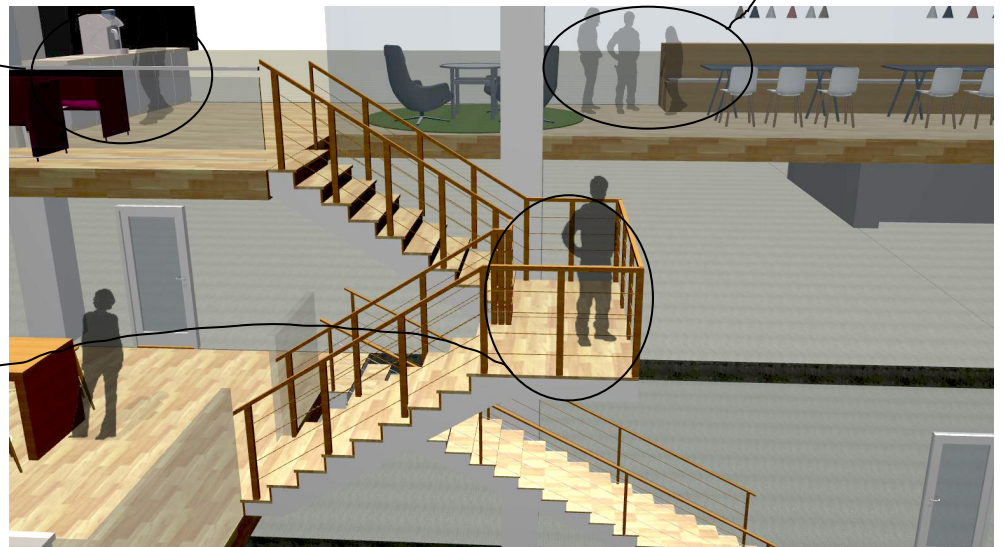
Work



Refreshments

Informal meeting

User circulation

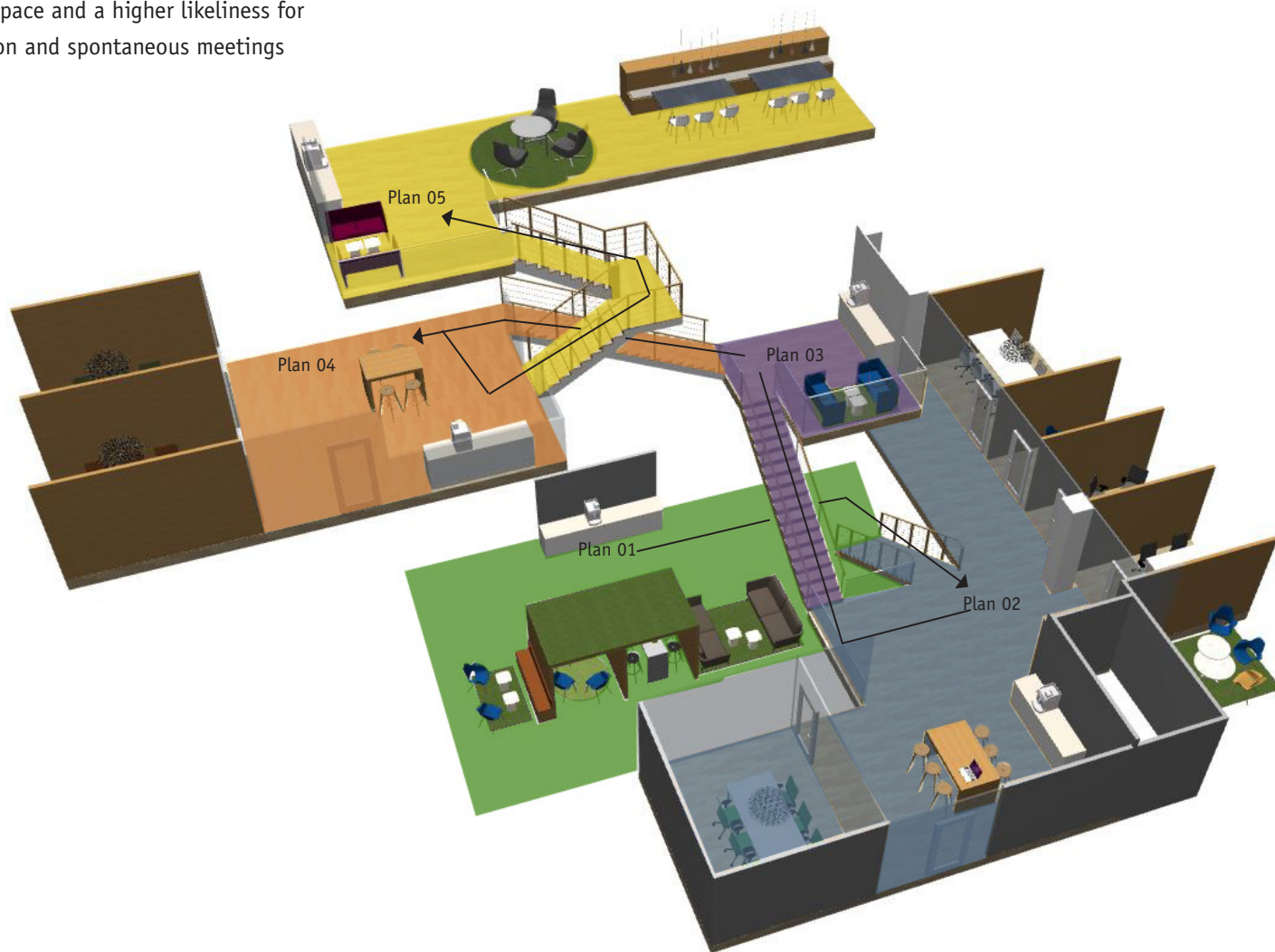




## VERTICAL COMMUNICATION

Models showing the vertical effect of the routing system. As mentioned earlier, it is the communication that happens vertically that is important in this design and how the connections of the different floors create more space and a higher likeliness for communication and spontaneous meetings

to happen. The user reaction to the design would be one to consider looking at all levels as a unit and not as separate entities.



## VERTICAL COMMUNICATION



## CONCLUTION

Early on in this text, it was refereed to an article written by Barbara T. Armstrong. She writes, "There is no corporate culture without community. A community where people come together, connect, celebrate and create a spirit of camaraderie". The core reason behind the product created in this thesis is to create, exactly that, community and camaraderie vertically in the building. Vertically being the important word. In office buildings today, a space for horizontal community and communication is always facilitated for. With this thesis the goal was to look at meeting places and in particular the ones that would happen in an in-between space and see how they can be used to create room for casual and unexpected meeting points for the employees resulting in among other things: knowledge sharing and office community.

The challenge and the question is, how will the product created work in other buildings? This is not a design that can just be implemented, and suddenly the whole dynamics of the building will change. It is a design where the concept and the findings can be implemented when the building has gone through research and analysis in the same way as the building used in this thesis for the product. Where is the entrance point, where goes the natural user movement path, where does the different levels best fit on the different floors? When all of these questions have been asked, then

ask yourself: Does every level have three or more reasons for a person to be there? The design cannot be considered finished till the answer to that question is yes. When these questions have been considered, the creation and implementation of the design can begin.

It has been mentioned earlier in this thesis that the design has been created with already exciting buildings in mind that has the same core problem as the building used as an example in this thesis. It is important that in the consumption based society we live in today, that the effort will be made so that buildings will survive and still be looked at as an attractive place to work. It will be necessary to make some changes so that these buildings will be able to compete with the 21st century office buildings, but that would be a small price to pay compared to unused buildings about to deteriorate.

In the end, the design is for the users. It has been created to give the users of an office a better everyday situation with facilities that will in a subtle way influence and direct them in an unconscious manner. The design has been created to give the users the opportunity to do what we do best; socialize and connect.

## ENDNOTES

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- <http://signal-arki.dk/>

### Floorplans:

- Iark AS





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Master thesis

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